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CHAMOIS HUNTING

IN THE

MOUNTAINS OF BAVARIA.

BY

CHARLES BONER.

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With Illustrations,

By THEODORE HORSCHELT,

OF MUNICH.

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PREFACE.

In the following pages will be found several German words often repeated; for much as I dislike the admixture of one language with another, the present case left me without an alternative, the words in question not having an equivalent in my own tongue. I have therefore employed "Laane," "Latschen," etc., each time any mention is made of these objects, thinking it was better to do so, than adhere pedantically to some English explicative, which would fail, after all, in conveying the exact meaning.

The compositions from the pencil of Mr. Horschelt need no praise of mine. The happy arrangement of each small picture speaks for itself; and we both may esteem ourselves fortunate in having found so skilful a hand as Mr. Hohe's to transfer them to the stone.

With regard to the scenes represented, I would observe, that they were chosen as giving a *general* notion of the mountains, rather than of the difficult and dangerous places met with by the Chamois Hunter. Indeed not one of the views shows a position of any peril. I was anxious to avoid everything that might appear like exaggeration; and for this reason a sketch ("Descending the Mountain,") which Mr. Horschelt had made was omitted, lest the daring hardihood displayed therein might excite doubts as to its truth.

In the descriptions, also, it was equally my aim to keep rather *within* the limits to which I might have gone. Some forms, perhaps, appeared to me more grand, and certain bright effects more beautiful, than they might have done to another: however I am not aware of having given to either an undue importance or a too heightened colouring. What I saw is described as *I* saw it. My wish has been to reflect back on the page those pictures which, as they passed, my memory had retained; to impart to others the same vivid impressions which my own mind had received.

CHARLES BONER.

ST. EMERAN, RATISBON,
January 10, 1852.

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CHAMOIS HUNTING

IN

THE MOUNTAINS OF BAVARIA.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

About twelve years ago I went out for the first time in my life to shoot deer. It was winter, and every attendant circumstance had the delightful excitement of novelty. As the woods whither we were going were some distance off, the whole party assembled betimes to a substantial breakfast. Then came the departure in the light sledges; each of us packing himself up in furs, and his feet and legs in coverings of sheepskin, to bid defiance to the sharp dry air, that was piercing enough to penetrate through every covering. Once off, the merry jingle of the bells on the horses' heads, the flying snow-flakes as the light-limbed Hungarian horses dashed on over the smooth frozen surface—the benumbed passers through

the streets shuffling along still half asleep, stopping however as we swept by—the partly hidden faces peeping from the windows, as the mingled melody of the many bells told what was coming—all afforded me amusement and gave me intense pleasure. There was then the arrival at the place of our destination, the forester's house, where all his men and under-gamekeepers drawn up in order were awaiting our arrival—the troop of beaters, uncouth, wild-looking peasants, clothed in every description of dress it is possible to imagine—the conversation with the head-keeper about the game, and the questions as to the day's sport—anxious inquiries too from one of the party, whether a deer that he had wounded some days before had been found or not—in short the whole scene in which I had become an actor was totally new and strange to me, and I looked on, curious to see what novelty would happen next.

Each little incident that has so often since seemed like an every-day occurrence, was full of interest then. We went out at last into the forest, where all was frost-bound, and every branch and twig inclosed in a crystal covering; where not a sound was heard, except the distant tramp of the beaters on the crackling snow, as they wound upwards through a hollow. Presently I was left alone at my appointed stand. By-and-bye the sharp sound of a rifle came tingling through the clear air, and soon after a troop of deer would come stepping along quite scared and wondering over the snow. It was a new world to me, all

this, and every incident gave me fresh delight. Later came the chase of the boar; and in summer-time I was on the hills, or moving amid the deep stillness of the woods at noon after the majestic stag. *That*, I thought, surpassed everything in enjoyment: the beautiful scenes into which it led me, the exciting circumstances that were constantly occurring, the gallant bearing of the magnificent creature that my rifle had at last brought down—all this caused my whole being to thrill with longing and with joy. After such a day in the forest, there was the sweet pleasure of going over every incident again in thought; I saw the mighty stag as he moved over the green sward in stately pride, I felt anew the hope and the fear and the breathless longing, and I once more stood over him as his vast form lay stretched upon the earth in the sunny beech-forest. At that time I lived in such sweet absorbing memories, or in anticipation of what was to come. For a day in the woods, with my rifle over my shoulder and the hope of meeting the red deer, I should have given up anything.

At last, however, as a matter of course I grew somewhat calmer. My delight was not diminished—it was as great as ever; but the flutter, and the palpitation, and the burning impatience, were subdued. And indeed there was much need they should be. Then too I became initiated in the mysteries of the noble art, and by degrees learned to look on what belonged to it with a more tranquil eye. And when I thought how new and strange all had once appeared

to me, how delighted I had been on first stalking through the forest, and how many there were in England to whom such exquisite pastime was quite unknown, it seemed that if I attempted to describe what had afforded me so much pleasure, the subject was one that could not fail to interest others also. I carried this idea long about with me, indolently delaying to execute what I had planned, when behold! another did what I had only thought of doing, and Mr. Scrope's book on Deer Stalking appeared. At the moment I was about to preach myself a sermon for my indolence, with a wise moral about the evils of delay, etc., but after a time I began to think the evil was not so great after all, and that it was very well as it was; much better indeed than had two works on the same subject appeared simultaneously.

Year after year passed away thus, and, thanks to the great kindness of the noble possessor of the extensive forests where I shot my first red deer, I afterwards enjoyed the privilege of always joining his party when the season began. Overlooking the Danube the woods through which we ranged extended on every side for many miles. Right pleasant days were those, when we were met in the morning by the young foresters bringing their report of where the deer were to be found. The young fellows had been abroad since the dawn, and had crossed the furthest hill-top and skirted many a wood to be ready by the time of our arrival. They now came pouring in from all sides to the trysting-place, bringing with them the ex-

pected intelligence. In *Stein Seigen* were two stags, one of ten and the other of twelve*; indeed he might have fourteen, so large was his shot. Another had been round Hell Berg and Schopf Loh, but had seen nothing. He had seen tracks of deer, it is true, but they were old ones; and where the deuce they had gone to he could not think. They must have been disturbed, for "he had had them there" for four successive days, and they were there yesterday. Suddenly perhaps a messenger would arrive, all breathless with haste, with such speed had he come down the steep path that leads through the forest to the village. He brought the news that *the* stag which had disappeared so suddenly was come back again. "The same that Count H. missed lately?" "Yes, the very same:" he was now in a small wood on the hill-side in the next forest, and a young peasant who was quick of foot had been despatched immediately to inform His Highness of the event. Such was the information contained in the head-forester's hastily written note. What excitement was there then, and what hopes and questionings! As I look back on these days, I can hardly believe that all is now over, that the forests are as deserts, no longer peopled by their red inhabitants—that these, like the Red Indian of the prairie, have been

* An expression made use of above may need explanation. The points on the antlers of a stag increase in number with his years; to them therefore reference is always made when denoting the age and size of the animal. "A stag of twelve" is one with twelve points or branches to his antlers.

hunted down and exterminated, and their haunts, once so full of life, become silent and lonely.

I think it would be quite impossible for me to describe the sensations, the exquisite delight of that delicious time. The freshness of the morning, the deep stillness of the woods at noon, the green and golden pageantry as the sunbeams pierced through a thousand crevices in the leafy roof, the breathless expectation when a light foot-fall told me the forest king was approaching—everything, in short, that belonged to the hunter's life was full of pleasurable sensations. But soon even these delights were to give way to others still more exciting. Our party during the shooting season was usually joined by two gentlemen, who went regularly to the mountains to hunt chamois. Often of an evening, after a day in the forest, and while we all were sitting over our coffee after dinner, they would relate some adventure that had befallen them while watching for a strong buck high up among the snowy fastnesses of Berchtesgaden, or tell of the merry life they led on the less formidable mountains and in the *Senn Hütten** of Baierisch Zell; while on another occasion our very blood would almost curdle, as we listened and heard how one of them had crept along the narrow ridge of a precipice near the Ober See, to fetch a chamois he had shot; and how, had his foot slipped

* *Senn Hütte*, the same as "Châlet." The hut inhabited by the herdsmen and the dairy-maids during their summer sojourn on the mountain.

or his head grown dizzy, he must have dropped perpendicularly through the air into the lake far far below him. And to these tales of adventure I listened with as much eagerness and curiosity as I had done, when a boy, to tales of shipwreck and of sailor life; and with the same feeling too,—an ardent longing to share in such adventurous pastime. The other, more susceptible perhaps than his companion to the glories around him, would describe the scene that presented itself to his astonished gaze, when, having gained the summit of the mountain, the mists suddenly parting let in the golden light of the rising sun, and showed huge rocks and precipices, and green herbage, and high-up valleys all lying close before him at his feet. There was genuine enthusiasm in all these descriptions, and, like all genuine feeling, it did not fail of its effect. I could no longer resist the desire to move with rifle at my back amid such scenes; to step along those narrow ledges of rock, or creep up through the steep ravines which had become almost like well-known places to me, so much had I heard about them and so particular had been my questionings; and at last the wish I had cherished for years was realized, and I stood upon the mountain-top and saw the chamois among the rocks.

Deer-stalking in the forest, with all its pleasures and excitement, was but tame sport to this. I could now well understand how with some it could become a passion so strong and irresistible that not even all the hazards of a poacher's life prevented its gratification.

The magnificent scenery, the daring and the danger, the vigour and elasticity of limb which the pure mountain air imparted, the glorious sunrise overflooding gradually the plains of snow, the loud cry of joy of the peasant-girl ringing upwards to the very sky,—all this sent a thrill through my whole frame, and my blood seemed to feel the thrill and tingled with exultation.

What would I not have often given could hearty old Christopher North have been with me to enjoy the sight,—to have watched the driving mists coming upwards from the valley, and have listened for a sound amid that silence and solitude. He rather paints than describes; his words are colour, with which he fills a canvas, and so presents you with a picture of the scene. And then, too, that other master of his art, Edwin Landseer—what a new field was here for his truthful pencil! Hardly a day ever passed but some grand effect, some picturesque group, or some striking incident reminded me of him, and made me wish that he could be there, to catch the happy moment and give it a permanent existence. The peculiar tone of that mountain scenery, the expressive features and bold characteristic bearing of the chamois, the occasionally perilous positions of the hunter,—all this, and much more beside, would, with his poetic mind and wonderfully skilful handling, afford such pictures as even his hand has not yet produced.

I had given up my intention of describing the red-deer and the forest as soon as Mr. Scrope's book

appeared; but when the new world that mountain life presents opened upon me, the former wish arose again, and I determined that chamois-hunting should now be my theme. It was a subject of which nothing was known in England, and I felt sure that if I were able to impart to what I wrote but a tithe of the charm which the scenes described really possess, it could not fail to interest. Should it not do so, the fault is solely mine.

CHAPTER II.

APPROACHING THE MOUNTAINS.

He only who has dwelt in the mountains, or has wandered for a time over their sides and through their valleys,—who has entered the simple but comfortable cottages, and chatted familiarly with the peasantry in their own peculiar dialect about their occupations and their pastimes;—such a one only can form a notion of the feeling of delight which is experienced when at length a sudden turn in the road shows him the mighty forms striving upwards to the sky, their peaks, may be, gleaming brightly with a covering of snow, or, if the air be clear and it still be summer weather, appearing with that beautiful deep blue tint which forms the distance in the South. There is something so cheering and gladdening in the sight! It calls to mind familiar greetings and rough but hearty welcomings,—pleasant returnings homeward from the chase, and song and the merry dance. Already with the mind's eye is seen the wide view from the mountain-top; you again snuff the

pure bracing air; and the shout and the *Jodler** of the shepherd-boy or *Sennerinn*† already resound in your ears.

As we approach the now near horizon all wears a different character. The houses are built otherwise, and have altogether another look than those we passed before; the roofs project over the sides and are bordered with some simple ornaments; a light wooden balcony is before the windows of the first story, and the walls are of snowy whiteness, and the trellis-work and doors and shutters are neatly and even tastefully painted. It looks gay, and green, and cheerful. And on the roofs we now see a bell, which, swinging between its cross-beams, calls home those who are in the fields to dinner or to supper. It is a sign that the wealth of the peasant here consists in pasture-land; and indeed no corn is seen, but the slopes and plain are covered with rich grass and with lowing kine. And then, too, the passers-by! The green pointed hat, worn alike by both sexes, with its golden tassel and gay flowers on the brim; the grey *joppe*‡ and short leathern breeches of the men; the gold-embroidered boddice and striped petticoat of the women are now not only more frequent, but are almost exclusively seen; and if we stop at a village, all that meets the eye tells us at once we are

* *Jodler*. The peculiar song of all mountaineers, the high notes being always a falsetto. The Brothers Rainer, now in England, sing it in perfection.

† *Senner—Sennerinn*. Dairy-man—dairy-maid.

‡ *Joppe* is the loose short coat worn by the mountaineer of Bavaria, and by the Tyrolian peasantry.

among another race than those we left behind in the flat country. It sounds pleasantly too—gratefully falling on the heart rather than on the ear—that friendly "*Grüss di Gott!*" (God greet ye!) with which each one salutes you as he enters the inn or place where you may be. There is a heartiness and simplicity, an absence of all conventional formality in the salutation and the manner of it, very characteristic of, and according well with, a mountain people. And how clean the village looks, how neat and healthy its inhabitants! They live better and work less hard than the peasantry of the more northern provinces; they are not exposed to a burning sun during the harvest season, nor to the wet and cold attendant on field labour. They are up on the mountain pasturages in summer, and in autumn and winter are comfortably housed in their snug cottages in the valley. Their corn they buy, and from their herds on the mountain they derive milk and butter and cheese in abundance; and thus may be said to live literally on the very fat of the land.

But how distinct the blue peaks become! We shall soon be at their base, nor will it be very long, we hope, before we are mounting their sides, and stepping carefully along yonder ridge that cuts the sky so sharply! For that is the Plau Berg, and some chamois are still there, and it is the place where we hope, with the forester's permission, to get a few days' stalking. How clear the air is! The outline of every distant object is seen with wonderful distinctness: there is not a

cloud in the sky, and the sun lights up the woodland slopes, and makes their sober brown and gold look quite gay and festal on this lovely autumnal morning.

And there is Tegernsee, its broad expanse of water as waveless as the air, and as clear and lucid too. A single boat is moving lazily across from a cottage on the opposite shore, and you wonder how so young a girl as she who is rowing can get such a cumbrous craft to move along even thus quickly. The broad brim of her green hat shades the upper part of her face; but that only makes the brightness of her black eyes the more apparent, and round her head are twined the braids of her long thick hair, just as it is worn by the women of the Tyrol. The silken kerchief crossed over her full bosom is tucked in her boddice; and if the *mieder** does seem too tight, it is rather from the swelling luxuriance of eighteen summers, than from any effort made in plying her rude pair of oars. She always had a friendly smile for you on entering her boat; though, as it seemed, she was not without her little stock of sorrow; for as I one day rowed by a

* *Mieder* is the stiff boddice of silk or velvet worn by the women. It is either richly embroidered, or, in some parts, a silver chain is passed like a lace from one side to the other, and fastened with hooks of silver. Indeed much luxury is often displayed in the dress of these country lasses. The cap (*Riegel Haube*) of the Munich girls, for example, contains a considerable quantity of the precious metal. The men too, in the low-lands especially, are given to display in their buttons. A rich peasant may often be seen with a long row of these down the front of his coat, one overlapping the other, each being formed of a broad silver coin of two groats value; on his waistcoat the same. On the frieze *joppe* of the mountaineer, however, there is no opportunity for such display.

country-house whose garden was reflected in the lake, she looked up wistfully at the closed windows; and I learned afterwards that the Jäger of the family, who had now left their villa for the town, was her lover, and that he had not yet written to her since they parted. "He has not forgotten me, I know," said Marie, with her usual pretty smile; "I shall soon get a letter, I am sure." And I am sure I hope with all my heart she may, for it were a pity so young a face should wear a look of sorrow. And were no letter to arrive, how oppressively sad to have that deserted house constantly before her as she rowed daily across the lake!

But I have forgotten the mountains and the autumnal morning, with talking of the pretty maiden of the ferry; however, she and her skiff, with its train of dancing light behind it, belong to the scene, and form a pleasing and even necessary feature in the landscape. As if all was to be festive on this exquisite October morning, here comes a gay procession. What a noise of deep, hollow-sounding bells is heard coming up the road that winds along the lake! There in front a stately cow advances, her horns adorned with a large wreath of beautiful flowers,—roses, dahlias, erica, and evergreens. Above her head towers a pile of festoons and garlands; and within an arch of flowers and foliage is a bright crown of tinsel, and below it in the same shining material a large C. It is the cattle of His Royal Highness Prince Charles of Bavaria returning for the winter from the mountain pasturage.

They are splendid animals of the Altgau breed; short legged, full uddered, and with dewlaps like the Colchian bulls. Many are the bells they wear,—long, broad bells, of sweetly sonorous metal, fastened round their strong necks by a thick strap of leather. But the foremost one has alone the coronal: she is to walk first, nor would she let one of the others pass her on any account whatever. She maintains her place in front as resolutely as I have known *une Dame du palais* insist upon having the *pas* when other ladies were present; and she heads the procession with a sturdy air, and a look of ineffable contempt for all going on around. Nor is it mere fancy that she is proud of her pre-eminence; she knows as well as you do that she is to be first; and she deserves her rank, for in truth she is a splendid creature. And behind comes the tall herdsman, his hat more than usually gay with flowers, and with a tuft of fine yellow feathery grass, that looks not unlike the plumage of the bird of paradise. How proudly he walks behind his troop, while the gardens that border the road are filled with gazers; and further on, the Queen and her ladies are waiting to see the cattle returning home to the valley. He looks calmly about him, but greets no one: he feels that to-day *he* is the principal personage; he is celebrating his triumph. I would fain wager though, when he sees the sweet friendly face of the young Queen yonder, his countenance will relax somewhat, and that it will soften and suddenly grow bright like a cloud when a sunbeam falls upon it. Follow-

ing him is a troop of goats, all unadorned save one in front; and after them comes the maiden who tends them, smart in her holiday attire. Bringing up the rear, like the baggage-train of an army, a waggon is lumbering on with household necessaries piled high upon it, and drawn by two sturdy oxen, whom a little peasant boy, with face as cheerful as the morn, guides along. The merry scene pleases him; he does not regret to leave the mountain, for what child ever yet grieved at change of place? But gay and festal as "the return from the Alm" always is, it is by far not so pleasing an event to the Senner and Sennerinn as the departure for "the mountain" in spring. Then, as the forester's young wife told me, who stood looking at them with her baby laughing on her arm, then if you meet them, and, wishing them good day, ask whither they are going, the reply, "Auf die Alm*!" is quite musical with pleasure, and their faces are radiant with thoughts of the life awaiting them on the green mountain slopes. But when meeting them in autumn, on their downward path, you put the same question, the answer, "Home!" tells at once by its tone how reluctant they are to leave their summer dwelling-place.

And indeed it is not to be wondered at. On some high spot, sheltered perhaps by perpendicular walls of rock a thousand feet, closed in, in a sort of "happy valley" up among the mountains, or else may be on a verdant piece of table-land, free and unbounded

* "To the pastures on the mountain!"

on every side, are built the rough wooden habitations —mere log-houses—of the Sennerinnen. Far, far below them the world lies extended. With the sun they rise, and are on the mountain-tops watching the brightness as it gradually diffuses itself over earth and sky. There, with the dawn, while the day is bursting forth in magnificent array, stands the peasant-girl all radiant and effulgent on some peak, the sun's rays glowing around her. Above her, in the distance, the snowy summits are growing rosy with the light; while the lesser mountains and the valleys below her have not yet seen the sun. And soon the whole face of the stupendous wall of grey rock is flushing in gratulation; all is teeming with sunbeams and brilliancy; the haze over the lake and river divides and evaporates; and shore and village, upland and hamlet lie before her eyes clear and distinct in the dewy freshness of an early summer morning. All is still on the mountain. She gazes on the coming glory, and is silent; she watches the gradual development in mute delight; but when the sun himself has at length come forth the spell is broken, and as she turns to look after her herd, proclaims her sense of freedom by a loud burst of song; and if ever content, joy, and lightheartedness were expressed in sounds, they are to be found in the simple melody of such mountain carol. I know nothing like it. How loud, how high, some of the notes! how rapidly they change! what gladness is in that *jodler*, and how boundingly the song returns from the high shrill tone, descending note by

note to the more sober ones, as though the heart were gradually recovering from its sudden fit of ecstasy. But it is only for a moment; and again it is heard mounting higher, heard louder than before, and faintly echoed back from the opposite mountain. No, that was not an echo,—it was a Sennerinn from those distant huts yonder answering the other.

It may be thought that the rough uncultivated nature of these peasants, placed as they are year after year amid the same scenes, and following the same unvarying occupations, will not be much influenced by the appearances of external nature; and that to suppose them to be so is rather a poetic fancy than plain sober fact. But I am not of this opinion: I believe that, unconsciously, they are impressed by the sublime scenery around them: they enjoy it differently from the man of more refined mind, but the result is perhaps nearly the same, only different in degree and quality; in both the principal feature being enjoyment, though more sensuous in the one than in the other. And that they do enjoy it to the full—to the full according to their capacity—is evident from their manner, their looks, and their conversation. They live surrounded by grandeur, and glory, and magnificence. Wonders happen around them; nor do they pass unheeded, for it is these that break the monotony of their life. We too are encompassed by wonders, but in the strife and turmoil we have no time to stop and marvel; while they, separated for months from the world and its wearing cares, keep

Comp. v Tr. Benedict.

Gedr. in J. B. Kuhns Lith. Anstalt, München.

Lith. v. F. Hohe.

their minds fresher and more susceptible to outward impressions. Knowing nothing of conventions, nor hardened or pressed down by want, they are, both mentally and bodily, more healthy and more vigorous. The purity of the air gives elasticity to the heart as well as to the limbs, and their simple diet is most surely not without a happy influence. Meat they never taste, and their sole drink is milk or water. Their pleasures are of the simplest kind: song is for them at once an occupation and a pastime, and when on the mountains, you are sure to hear some solitary watcher over his herd beguiling the lonesome hours with a mouth harmonicon, or filling the air with one of their happy songs, quite as full of happiness in its way as the carolling of the lark. Occasionally the chamois-hunter descends to their dwelling, to cook a warm meal or to pass the night under shelter of their roof. From him they get the latest news of what is going on in the vale; they give him a hearty welcome, and the evening is passed merrily, and concluded, may be, with a dance; for the Jäger is sure to find favour with the sex, and no young knight-errant was ever better received by the fair dames of a castle where he craved hospitality, than the trim and merry young hunter by the Sennerinn on the mountain.

But to return to the high-road. There was no boat to be had at the moment to take me across the lake to the little village of Egern; so, putting my portmanteau on the cart of a young peasant who was just driving by, with rifle in hand up I jumped, and

in less than a quarter of an hour we were at Rottach, five minutes' walk from the place of my destination. A little urchin offered to "*radeln**" (trundle) my things to the inn; so helping the little fellow to put the luggage on his barrow, off we set together. But he soon stopped to rest, and when he saw me waiting for him, he told me "to go on: there was no need whatever for me to stay, he would be sure and come;" and as I saw he wished to have the glory of performing his piece of work quite alone, I left him to follow at his leisure.

I am always glad to employ a child when circumstances make it possible; first because I like children's company and to hear their talk, and also because I wish that they should know how comely a thing it is to be employed usefully, and how sweet the earnings of one's own labour are. I have a habit, when walking, of scattering crumbs for the birds, who are almost sure to find them; and just so, I fancy, a chance incentive to industry, or a little reward for some kindly-meant attention, may not be wholly lost, but, being remembered long afterwards, may incite to a love of

* The sight of the green fields and hedgerows is not more pleasant to him who has been "long in populous cities pent," than is to my ear the sound of a genuine provincialism, uttered in a broad dialect, giving earnest as it does of being really beyond the influence of the town. Once in Somersetshire I remember a peasant pointing out to me a place in the distance, and telling me it was near where yonder "housen" were; giving the word "house" its old Saxon plural. That one word seemed at once to remove me from the haunts of over-civilization, and I felt sure I had really got into the country. It was the same with the "*radeln*" of my little peasant-boy, and I welcomed it accordingly.

occupation, and encourage to acts of friendliness and to good behaviour. Most children are delighted to be employed, and the consciousness that they are *of use* makes them quite elate: it is the germ of a feeling which, if properly nurtured, ripens into self-respect.

Having made my arrangements at the village inn overlooking the lake, I went to the forester's house to present my credentials. Ha! there are the antlers over the gable, denoting who is the inmate. Eight—ten—twelve! a good stag must he have been that once bore them. It always gives me pleasure to see this trophy over the doorway or on the pointed roof, for it is a sign of freemasonry, and tells me that, in case of need, there is a comrade near. The letter presented, and my story told, I heard exactly what I was prepared for. "Things look very bad just now, Sir, I fear there is not much to be done. The chamois have no peace—the peasants are always out in the mountains, and what they do not shoot they scare away. However, if I can oblige you, I shall be very happy to do so. I'll speak to the under-keeper, and hear if he has seen any chamois lately."

When he came up, "Well, Meier," inquired the forester, "what chance is there, think you, of doing something on the mountains? All looks very bad, I fear. Do you think you might get a shot or two?"

Meier's countenance wore no encouraging look, and he only repeated what I had already heard, of the scarcity of the chamois, and of the depredations the poachers were constantly committing. "All about

here, as you know," the forester added, "were chamois and red-deer in abundance, and now it is a chance if a single head of game is seen in a day's stalking. However," turning to Meier, "the Peissenberg would be the likeliest place—there perhaps might be a chance."

"It is the only place where there are any now," Meier said. "Chamois *are* there, but the mountain is large, and there being so few perhaps we might not see them. And then too a single gun only! it is difficult to guess where they will come for one person to get a shot: with two it were easier. However we can try. I will place you," he said, turning to me, "where the chamois are most likely to pass, and then I will go through the wood and drive them out. But I cannot say for certain you will get a shot."

"Never mind," I answered, "let us try; if we see nothing it cannot be helped."

So it was arranged that on the day after the morrow we should try our luck on the Peissenberg. I was just going away when the forester said, "There is a good stag on the Ring Berg; Meier has heard him for some days past, if you would like to try for him."

A stag in the rutting season! I pricked my ears at the announcement. "A *good* stag?" I asked.

"Oh yes, a very good one."

"Of how many, think you?"

"Of twelve certainly. Meier saw him yesterday, about two hundred yards off, but the ground was unfavourable, and he did not fire."

"Yes," said Meier, "he is a capital stag; he is one that would please you, if you could get him. I have often heard him of a morning, but yesterday only I was able to get near enough to see him. He is worth going after, I assure you."

"But," said the forester, "delay in this case is not advisable, for at the top of the mountain is the boundary line between the royal chase and that which the peasants now have. At this season the stag will be always on the move, and as the limits are so near, he might very likely cross over into that part which is not ours; if so, we can do nothing."

"Has he any hinds with him?" I asked.

"No; but there must be a few on the mountain."

"Well, that's the grand thing; if that is the case he will hardly go away. However we'll try for him tomorrow. Can you go, Meier?"

"The best way," said the forester, "would be to start this afternoon, and sleep at a farm-house at the foot of the mountain. They can perhaps make you up a bed; and something to eat and drink you are sure to get. Then start the next morning early, so as to be on the mountain when day breaks. By leaving about half-past three today, you will get to the farm in good time this evening, and can sit out a little and listen if you hear the stag. And take the shell with you," he said, turning to Meier; "perhaps you may want it, if you hear him near." And so matters were settled.

At the appointed time I saw Meier from my window

coming to fetch me, and we presently set off for the hills. It was a delicious afternoon. We ascended by a path which had been made for the cattle; and as it had been raining lately, and the cows had just been driven down, the road was none of the best. The scene below was very lovely, as seen from our gentle eminence. Repose, and peace, and calm, were impressed on the landscape. The bright quiet afternoon was just fitted for the placid lake and the undulating woodland. There are some spots with which only certain effects accord, which demand a particular sky to suit their marked character. Now to me Tegernsee seems one of these. Sun and gladness belong to it, nor would grand masses of shade and a strong effect become it so well. Art would no doubt make even such appearances harmonize with the scene, for what cannot Art accomplish? But what I mean is, its features being of a placid stamp, a stern expression would be more difficult for us to reconcile with it. With the human countenance it is the same.

We came at last to a spot surrounded by high woods, and here we seated ourselves to listen for the stag. The evening was calm, and all was very still, yet we listened in vain for the much wished-for voice from the woods above. After waiting some time we were about to go, when from a turn in the road before us three men emerged. Quick as lightning out flew Meier's telescope, as he said, "They all have guns!" He looked at them for awhile, and muttering, "The rascals!" put up his glass, but still continued watching

them till they were out of sight behind the rising ground where we stood. As we rose to go we saw them again among the bushes: they now perceived us too; and, as if to show that they did not care for having been seen, began whistling and making all sorts of jeering noises till we were out of sight. "They will be out betimes tomorrow, no doubt," said Meier; "they will try for the stag, too, I dare say."

We came to the farm. It was a large building on a pleasant meadow, surrounded by the mountains. On entering, the cheerful blaze of a fire burst upon us, at which the supper for the maids and labourers was being prepared. Now a cow-herd, now a dairy-maid dropped in, and exchanged a word with my companion, or stopped and chatted with us both and asked about our plans for the morrow. A savoury omelet was soon frying on the kitchen-fire, and this, with a slice of bread and a glass or two of beer, formed an excellent supper. An elderly woman was our cook, who, it seemed, had to provide for and superintend the others, and was in fact a sort of housekeeper. Knowing I had come from Munich, she asked if I knew Professor von Kobell*,—"he who

* Franz von Kobell is well known as the author of some volumes of poems in the Bavarian dialects. Being my friend, I might be deemed partial were I to speak of him as I would wish. It frequently amused me, during my stay in the mountains, to find there were three names which were like familiar household words in every part I came to—that of H.R.H. Duke Max in Bavaria, Professor von Kobell, and Count Max Arco-Hohenburg. Whenever these were mentioned, and I said I had the honour of being acquainted with the Duke, and that the two others were my intimate friends, it

had written the books, and made poems and Schnadahüpfln." She was quite pleased to hear that I did; and, seeming to think that on this account I must be better worth speaking to, began chatting with me.

"A merry comrade that," said I. "Merry!" she exclaimed, "Merry! 'faith, that he is indeed; and how he can touch the cithern, and sing Schnadahüpfln*! There are not many such as he!" And then turning to my neighbour,—"And you, Meier, you can't sing?"

"No."

"Nor play the cithern?"

"No."

"Nor whistle a merry tune?"

"No."

"A pretty fellow, truly! a Jäger and not sing! But where's Max gone? *He* could do everything, and he was right merry too, and full of jokes!"

"And who is this Max?" I asked.

"A young forester, very different to Meier there, who can do nothing!" she answered, laughing. "He could play the cithern, and sing songs, one merrier than the other, and whistle too—'twas like a blackbird to hear him! And then he danced, and how he would make us all laugh with his stories! and he was such a good-looking young fellow too—much better-looking

seemed to be a passport to their good opinion, and the heartiest grew still more hearty than before. Especially among the foresters the latter name had a mighty influence; and when they heard that we had often shot a good stag or wild boar together, they looked on me as being "a good man and a true," and drew nearer and talked more familiarly.

* See a later Chapter.

than you, Meier—and what teeth he had—white as ivory!"

Though all this was said half laughingly, there was still some seriousness in the old housekeeper's manner, and I could not help smiling at the praises bestowed on this mountain Adonis. Meier took all her jokes very quietly—more so perhaps than he would have done had they come from one not quite so elderly. We still chatted around the fire for a time, and then went upstairs to rest, where to my surprise I found two excellent beds in readiness, instead of clean hay, as I had expected. One look at the night, to see what promise for the morning, and then to sleep.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER THE GOOD STAG.

The next morning we were up and ready by four o'clock. The moon and stars were still shining brightly; the air was fresh, but not cold. I went to the door of the house and looked out into the night. Nothing stirred: there was no sign of a single living creature being abroad: not even the murmur of a rivulet was to be heard, descending from the mountains to the plain,—a sound which among the hills seldom fails to greet the ear, either near or in the distance. But there rose around me that low hum, that indescribable rustle, which is never heard but in the silence of the night, and which seems to make the stillness palpable. From the depth of the forests before, behind me, and on every side, came that low deep murmur *tingling* on the ear, as when the myriad buzzings of the invisible insect world in summer unite in one drowsy hollow tone at noon. It was not loud, but it was distinct and very audible, even to an ear not quickly sensitive:

it came from out of the earth, and from the woods, and from the sides of the mountains, and rising upwards filled all the air, even up to the very hill-tops lying in the cold light of the stars. Was this low sound perchance the breathing of Nature in her trance-like sleep?

We took our rifles and set out. Until we came to the woods it was easy enough to proceed; but here, it being steep and slippery, and as we were unable to see the path and the obstacles it presented, our progress was rather slow. This however I should say of myself only; for my companion was always in advance, nimbly mounting before me, and waiting till I reached him. The logs of wood left to rot on the ground are sadly inconvenient on such occasions: you knock your shins almost to pieces against them, or treading on slippery surface of the humid branches, go down the earthwards with your nose as pioneer. We presently came to a clearing, where we stopped and seated ourselves on a felled tree to listen for the stag. Twice we had heard his hoarse rumbling roar from afar, as we ascended the hill-side, but now again all was hushed, and we listened and listened in vain. Taking a large sea-shell out of his *rücksack**, Meier put it to his

* *Rücksack.* A square bag or sack of coarse green canvas, used as a knapsack by the peasant generally, and by the hunter to carry his game. A cord runs round the mouth or opening, by which it can be drawn together. From this part a strap passes over each shoulder, and is attached to the corners below. The capaciousness of such a rücksack is something quite marvellous; there is really no end to what may be stuffed into it.

mouth, and began to imitate that peculiar sound betokening ardour, impatience, and anger, which the stag makes at this season when seeking the hind. It was really a pretty sight; it had even something classical in it. There the young fellow lay, reclining on the fallen trunk, his hat off, his throat bare, and the coming light playing about the upturned shell, as, Triton-like, he blew into his ocean-horn, and made the air vibrate with the hoarse bellowing. Below, in a vast chasm, were floating thin mists, gently rising upwards to meet and to be dispersed by the sun. On they came like waves; and it needed no very brilliant imagination to behold an ocean before you, and he with the spotted shell lying on its shore.

But no answer came. Once before we had heard, just as the shadows were beginning to leave the top of the opposite mountain, a hollow sound come murmuring across the valley before us. It was scarcely audible; it was a low muttering, as though it proceeded from out of the mountain itself.

"Did you hear it?" exclaimed Meier. "That's the stag, but he is a great way off. He will go, I am afraid, on the other side of the mountain, and then we may not follow him, for there the royal forests end."

"How vexatious! he probably has no deer with him, or he would hardly go away."

And again through his shell sounded the deep hoarse tones; but it was all in vain. "He must be far off, quite out of hearing, or he would come for certain;

he would be sure to answer the challenge. But since we heard him last, he has gone no doubt over the brow of the mountain, on the other side where the sound cannot reach him. It is of no use to wait any longer."

So up we got and went further. We stopped at a spot that overlooked the whole dell and gave a good view of the steep mountain-side facing us. "We may perhaps see a roebuck—it is not at all unlikely —the underwood there is a good covert for them," said Meier; and jumping on the stump of a felled tree, which overhung the precipitous declivity, he gazed carefully around and below. But nothing was to be seen. The new laws which had been in force since the Revolution effectually prevented the chance of our seeing any game whatever: all was destroyed or driven away. Some goats only with tinkling bells round their necks were browsing here, and came near to look at us; then on a sudden they sprang away, with a troop of white kids after them.

As the young Jäger stood on the block of wood, leaning on his staff, I could not but think how picturesque a group he and his dog made. The mountain stick was thrust forwards, forming one leg of a triangle, and his body the other, and on the top of it both hands were crossed, on which his chin rested. The grey *joppe* hung loosely about him, his bare knees showed beneath the short leathern breeches, the rifle was slung at his back, and his dog sat at his feet watching as steadily as he. As he leaned forward, supported by the firmly-planted pole, he was quite hanging over

the depth below. The whole figure was motionless; the eyes only turned from side to side, exploring every bush and prying into each shadowy nook, or running over those green patches among the trees where it was likely a roe might come to graze. I remember to have seen, when a child, a print in the Bible, of Jacob thus leaning on his staff; and I quite well remember too how much the figure pleased me, and how in the attitude there was for me a charm which I could not then account for*. And in some strange wise or other this picture was always associated in my mind with a sentence in 'Murray's Exercises:' "And Jacob worshiped his Creator leaning on the top of his staff." The Bible picture and the well-known words recurred at once to my mind; and here I saw before me what my childish imagination had often dwelt on with indefinable, inexplicable delight. Since those days of childhood the boy had himself leant upon his staff just as Jacob had done; and thus too had, like him, worshiped his Creator amid the mighty works of His hands.

We now went to the top of the hill. Below us was the lake, in all the freshness and brightness of early morning, and behind rose the rocky ridge of the Plau Berg, and behind this again other peaks covered

* Nor am I much better able to do so now. In a figure thus leaning there is an air of perfect repose, united however with power and strength; for you see the whole man before you standing at nearly full height; and though the attitude impresses one with rest, it indicates at the same time a readiness for action, which takes from it all appearance of slothful ease or of fatigue.

with eternal snow. A look around, and then downwards, and home. After having reported ourselves to the forester, it was arranged that on Monday we should start at five and try for a chamois. However, on Monday the weather was unfavourable, and other circumstances also prevented me from stalking on that day. So packing a few things in my rücksack, I set off across the mountains for Fischbachau.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STAG IN THE RUTTING SEASON.

Having alluded to the stag during the rutting season, it is as well perhaps to add a few words on this subject for the information of those uninitiated in the mysteries of woodcraft.

On the Feast of St. Egidius, 1st of September, the rutting season is said to begin. Thus it is, at least, according to the old sayings of those practised in the noble art of Venerie. The stag leaves the deep recesses of the forest and comes forth to the skirts of the woods, and is seen even by day in the glades and coppices. The good pasture of the summer months has made him sleek, and the blood begins to flow through his full veins with a more impetuous current. Like the youth who has bloomed into manhood, and who looks around him with a brighter eye than heretofore, the stag now gazes dauntlessly in all the pride of vigorous strength, and his bold front seems almost to challenge to the attack. He who ere this has

dwelt like a recluse in the forest solitudes, now comes forth into the noonday world; away he bounds, and before the morning dawns he is in another territory: he has traversed the valleys and has toiled up the steep mountain-sides, and, bearing away for the well-known open glade in the beech-forest, has reached it before the hinds have brushed the dew from the grass in retreating to their covert*.

And thus, year after year perhaps, will a stag be seen at a certain spot at this particular season, although he is absent the whole year beside. Not only is the distance he travels, but the speed also with which he traverses the ground, astonishing. His pace is a sort of ambling trot, nor does he skim over the ground at full speed except when the foe is nigh; indeed at this season a stag could not maintain such pace long, he being too well-conditioned, and his broad back and sides too heavy, for the exertion of a stride like the courser's when careering over the plain; and though the poet may, with undisputed license, describe him as *galloping* along, he never does so except when suddenly scared and when *hotly* pursued. And indeed in his other pace there is beauty too, and more of

* Since these words were written I have met with a very graceful allusion to the deer being out at early morning, in the poems of M. Casimir Sarbievius, translated by R. C. Coxe.

"Friendly dews! with faithful guiding
Show where roving, feeding, loving,
Sought the stag at last his hiding,
Cautious through the covert moving!
Show your king the cloven horn,
Gentle dews of early morn!"

majesty. Though retreating before some danger, there is no ignoble haste or precipitancy in his flight. With front erect and steady eye he moves over the ground, seeming hardly to touch the earth, so lightly does he step along; and in his whole mien and bearing he is "every inch a king."

At the usual time he suddenly appears amid his old haunts and his former loves. Until now a troop of hinds only were to be seen by the hunter who watched for them at morning or at evening, with the calves of this, and the fawns of last year; but now on the skirts of the herd he sees—or at first thinks he sees—a pair of branching antlers towering in the air; and behold! the monarch is indeed returned. He has added another embattlement to his crown since he was last seen; in stature too he is changed, and well indeed may he claim, irrespective of his diadem, to be called "a royal hart." But how different now his look from that time when he disappeared in the wilderness; like the prodigal, who, with wasted strength and but a wreck of his former self, skulks away that he may be seen by none. How worn and broken down did he leave the scenes of all his pleasures, and how vigorous and in what gallant trim does he return! Should a rival dare to loiter about the spot, he goes forth to meet him, to do battle for his rights; to maintain them or be vanquished in the encounter. No knight, burning to achieve a deed of chivalry, ever charged down upon a foe with more valiant daring than will he, when he sees approaching the antlers of some new wooer tossing in the air

and seeming to defy him to combat. Nor does the challenge remain unanswered: with his brow-antlers lowered like a lance in the rest, he rushes on the foe, and lucky is the intruder if he can ward the thrust; for should it penetrate his ribs or shoulders he would most surely pay for his temerity with his life*.

When once the stag has joined the hinds he does not quit them. He walks continually round and round the herd, keeping them together and preventing even a single one from leaving him. A stag will sometimes have twelve, fifteen, twenty, or even more hinds with him, and proudly but despotically he moves among them, like a sultan in his serail. His blood is boiling in his full veins; his passion consumes him, and he flies to the pool, not to assuage his thirst, but to cool the fire that is burning within him. He rolls in the shallow water and lays himself in the slimy bed; and when he rises reeking from the mire, his back and sides and throat are covered with it, and the long hair of his neck is matted together like a thick and tangled mane. He eats little or nothing now. Ever and anon he stands still, and by a low, deep, hollow sound,

* It is not more than three weeks since the day on which I write this (December 5th), that a young stag, one of six only, rushed upon another, and striking his brow-antlers into his side killed him on the spot. It was a strange occurrence, on account of its being late in the season; had it been a month earlier there would have been nothing surprising in it. During the rutting season however the weaker stags are kept away from the herd by the stronger ones; and when these go, the younger ones then take their place, and are in their turn as fierce and as jealous of an intruder as their more potent rivals were before them.

that seems to come from his very inmost being, and tells of consuming pain and longing, will he give vent to the feelings that goad and torture him. I know no sound to which I could liken it, though I can imitate it well. It is not a roar, nor a bellowing, but a *rumbling* sound, approaching perhaps nearer to a deep long-drawn-out groan than aught else, which at last is, as it were, hurled forth two or three times, in a short, quick, impatient manner. At early morning, while the stars are still watching, you may hear the hollow tone from the hill-side, and, if you do not know what it is, might perchance fancy it came from the bowels of the earth, and that the mountain was inwardly convulsed by elements at strife with each other. Indeed I imagine that an incipient volcano would make some such noise.

The throat of the stag swells now to an unusual size. Week after week goes by, and his appearance at last gives tokens of his spendthrift waste of strength and of wild excess. His once sleek sides are sunken in, his broad back has dwindled into narrowness, and a sharp ridge is visible along its length. The haunches that were so full and rounded have hollows in them, the head is no longer stately and erect, nor in the creature's whole mien and bearing is there more of pride and majesty. The voice has grown thick and husky, and a hoarse sound, void of strength or fullness, is uttered at distant intervals. Senility has taken the place of youth; and of strength, decrepitude. At such time it is comparatively easy to get

near the stag, for he sees and hears nothing, and, if I may use the expression, is reduced almost to a state of imbecility. I have myself crept along the ground, and got from bush to bush until I was near enough to have brought him down with a pistol-shot.

It is in truth astonishing that the stag should be so long-lived as he is; for the whole year through, with the exception of at most two months, he is either taxing his nature to the utmost, or striving to recruit his strength through an inclement and unpropitious season. The rutting is over; and now, with lantern body and but the ghost of his former self, he has the raw winter months before him. There is no green pasturage where he may appease the cravings of his hunger; the ground is covered with deep snow; nor can he get at the young corn, which, were it not thus hidden, would furnish a most dainty banquet. He is obliged to have recourse to the rind of the young trees, and to nibble the tips of the last shoots and twigs. Poor nourishment this for a famished worn-out creature! yet till the spring-time comes it is all he has to feed on. And hardly has he recovered himself a little, when nature demands of him an immense exertion: his antlers fall off close to his head, and another pair, even higher and stronger than those just lost, are to supply their place. And this operation is not a work of time, proceeding slowly and with gradual development; but, by a strong effort, of rapid, nay almost sudden, growth. In three months the stag has put forth his branching antlers again;

and this time too the stems are thicker than before, and on each is one point more than the preceding year. When we think of the comparatively slow rate at which a hothouse plant, with all possible care and forcing, expands in growth, or a child or other young animal increases in stature, we can hardly comprehend the productive power that, in so short a time, should be able to force into existence an excrescence of such size and weight, demanding too for its nourishment the noblest juices—the sap and very marrow of the body. Yet so it is. From the stag's head, "shorn of his beam," the young shoot springs up, and like a sapling buds and puts forth a branch, and then another and another. Upwards still it rises; and the thick stem divides on high into more taper branchings, forming as they cluster together a rude mural crown. At the extremities all is soft and tender, porous, and with much blood. Over the whole, to preserve it from injury until it has grown firm and hard, is a thick velvet covering; and not until all beneath can bear exposure to the air does this fall off. When first got rid of, the antlers are as white as ivory, but they soon acquire their usual darker hue.

It is now summer, and the stag revels in abundance. He roams through the woods and enjoys the glorious time in quiet luxury. But as was said before, this is of short duration: the Feast of St. Egidius is at hand, and his life of slothful ease is at an end.

CHAPTER V.

A WALK TO FISCHBACHAU.

The young forester Meier was going to see his father, who lived at the foot of the Peissenberg; and as my road over the Kühzagel Alp passed his house, we set off together.

"Well, Meier," I asked at parting, "are you sure I shall find the way?"

"You can't miss it. To the top of the mountain goes a road; a little way up is a bridge; do not cross it, but keep straight on. Higher up you will come to a place where there are three roads—take the middle one, it leads downwards, and then you have the mountain stream beside you all the way."

"Well, adieu! and by the time I come back look out for the chamois."

Now it is a very easy matter for one who knows a road by heart, to tell another of paths to the right and to the left, and that he is not to choose this, but is to take that; and as you listen you at last get

inoculated with a notion of its easiness, and allow yourself to commit the folly of starting off alone. But once in the wood the pathway is hardly discernible, and across the mountain-top there is no trace of foot-steps to be seen; so at last you come to a stand, fully convinced of having done a very foolish thing. For years I flattered myself with the belief of possessing in a superlative degree the organ of locality; and it is only after having more than once missed my way in the forest and on the mountain, and discovered my reckoning to be almost always wrong, that this crotchet of mine has been given up, and the acknowledgment forced from me that there is as much chance of my going astray in this physical world, as in the one where we are apt to take our passions for guide-posts. Once, when lagging behind my companions, I lost my way on the mountains; and after having traversed a space which no one would have credited but for my description of some peculiar features of a remote spot reached while thus wandering, I was at length fortunate enough to see afar off an old human being who, on my forcing him to go with me, put me on the right track. Had I not found that poor weather-beaten creature just then, my bones would now be lying up amongst those heights.

In the mountains all is on so large a scale, the stranger is constantly deceiving himself as to distance. A trifling change of position, too, makes everything look quite different. In descending from an eminence the forms selected as landmarks are at once lost sight

of; on getting nearer to the foot of the mountains the seemingly narrow valley opens into breadth: hill, mound, dell, all unperceived till now, start into sight; you become confused by a multitude of objects not calculated on before, and, having already perhaps deviated from the straight line to evade a precipice or to cross a torrent, are wholly at a loss what direction to take. You look back to reconnoitre the ground and find your starting-point. But it is not to be found: all is changed; other forms are seen up against the sky; no single feature that was there before is now to be recognized. You turn round and ask yourself if in coming downwards yonder peak with snow was not on your right, and you are not sure of the answer, for there is another very like it where snow is also lying:—how then distinguish between them? And if you determine to go straight on toward the distant ridge, on getting there at last after two hours' desperate climbing, all again is like an unknown land, and not a single mountain-top that forms part of the new horizon have you ever beheld before. Landmark you have none—the few you had are now irrecoverably lost. There you stand in vast space, utterly helpless. Far, far around you rise those sharp lines against the sky which bounds your present world. How gladly would you look into the space beyond, and strive to catch at hope! But this "beyond" is shut out from you as impenetrably as that vague unknown which is beyond the grave. And you still keep your look fixed on those impassable barriers: a strange irresistible

power seems to rivet your staring eyes upon them, and you gaze on with awe, and dread, and longing!

Ay, with awe! for they stand before you, those huge forms, in overpowering, unparticipating stillness. All is motionless. Nothing stirs that forms a part of them. A shadow may flit across their face, but that is an extraneous thing, and when it has swept by, there they are, still in the same cold, rigid imperturbability. If only a tree were there, with its softer outline, and its boughs, though not moving, at least conveying the feeling that they *might* move, as being a thing with life! But no, the hard lines of those fixed features are unrelieved by one milder form; stillness, unwaning stillness, sits on them everlastingly, like Death! And yet you gaze on them with longing;—the longing that with your vision you could penetrate what is beyond. It is a yearning such as the soul feels to know of that "other side" which will be seen only after death.

On the finest day too the mists will suddenly arise, wrapping all in their flowing cloud-like folds. When thus overtaken in the mountains by dense fog, if it last you may look upon it as your shroud.

In crossing the barren heights of the Valtelline, I remember to have met, on the summit, a little altar raised by friendly hands from the stones which lay strewn around, in a niche of which shone a human skull and a heap of bones. They had belonged to a contrabandista, who, while smuggling his wares across this scene of desolation, had been overtaken by the mists sweeping upward from the valley, and, unable

to proceed, had sat down and been frozen to death. "On such occasions," said my guide, "nothing is to be done but to lie down and die." Long after having passed the monument I could see, on looking back, the white bones gleaming in the sun-light, for the elements had bleached them to a snowy whiteness.

In going to Fischbachau, however, there was no fear of my becoming the hero of a "lamentable occurrence" in the columns of a newspaper, or of having an *ex voto* erected to my memory. I lost my way however, as might very well have been expected; but I regained it after awhile, and came upon the road that leads from Schlier See. The rain had now ceased, and the sun looked out cheerily and with his very brightest smile, as if determined to make amends for not having shown himself earlier. Schlier See was before me, a little island in the middle of its clear waters, and which, from its glittering brightness, might, for aught I know, have risen out of the lake just before I came. I looked at it a long time, for its beauty and freshness reminded me of England.

The forester's house at Fischbachau had once been a cloister; and the clergyman of the parish still inhabited one half the building. The corridor was filled with rows of antlers, and the sitting-room of the family was decorated in the same appropriate manner. All round the top were ranged the bent horns of the chamois; below these the more majestic antlers of the stag; and lower down, interspersed also at intervals among the others, were those of the roebuck.

The windows were filled with ivy and creeping plants, and these trailed along from antler to antler and hung down in careless festoons, or they were twined round the frames hanging on the walls with engraved portraits in them, among which I recognized some well-known faces. At the further end of the room was a row of rifles and fowling-pieces, with here a strangely-fashioned powder-flask or cramping-irons for the feet in winter; on a nail hung the rücksack, the green hat above it with a gay flower on its brim; while a guitar in a corner, and a cithern on a table, gave evidence of gentler pastime than the chase affords. But the neatness and the creeping evergreens had already told of feminine care that presided here. All was as simple as possible, but the place looked comfortable, and everything was deliciously clean. Having changed my wet clothes, I returned and talked with the forester. "It is no pleasure now," he said, "to have to do with the chase. I do not like even to think about it. The mountains opposite—those you see from the windows—were full of chamois, the Miesing especially. From this room you might often with a telescope see thirty or forty together; and now on the whole mountain there are perhaps not twenty."

"And there were stags, too?" I asked.

"Stags and roes in abundance. But now all are shot. The peasants shoot everything. There," said he, pointing to the antlers between the windows, "is the last stag that Berger, my assistant forester, shot. It was a good one, as you see, and I have put up the

antlers in remembrance, for I dare say he will never shoot another—it will be his last."

"It is hardly credible," I observed, "that in so short a time almost every head of game should have been exterminated. It is very sad, for it would take a long time to have all again as it once was."

"No, it is not surprising when you think that the game had never any rest. Day after day it was disturbed, shot at, scared and driven from place to place. The peasants did not get much, for if they wounded a stag or chamois they had no good dog to follow it with, and so it was generally lost. And all game must have quiet,—that is as indispensable as food. A great part therefore went across to the Tyrol; and the gamekeepers too shot all they could, rather than let the peasants get it."

And then he told me how he used to go into the mountains, and would sit for hours and watch the chamois and the young kids as they disported themselves on the green slopes, or stood upon the rocks and leaped from crag to crag; but now, he said, he would go up there no more, for all his pleasure in doing so was gone, and his occupation rejoiced him no longer*.

* In a letter received from the worthy forester since this was written, he says:—"Although late in the autumn, after you were gone many chamois collected here again. I much doubt if we shall see any next summer, for the poor creatures that are now looking for their winter haunts are so scared and hunted about, that their utter extermination must be the consequence. No one can possibly tell the pain all this causes me; and I therefore never express what I feel to any one but a hunter, and one who loves the chase, and of whom I am persuaded beforehand that he will understand and sympathize with what I suffer."

I already knew what excellent hunting-grounds all this neighbourhood afforded; for though it belonged to the Crown the whole mountain range had been rented by one of my friends, who, by carefully preserving the game for a year or two, and by the excellent order he maintained, had greatly enhanced the value of the chase. He had his own foresters stationed in all parts; young active fellows, and moreover excellent chamois-hunters, who understood their duty well, and did it. Just as all was in high perfection and the game abundant, those political changes took place which gave the right of shooting to every individual of the community. In order somewhat to diminish his pecuniary losses, my friend Count Arco, to whom the chase belonged, ordered that the game should be shot by his own people rather than by the poachers; and venison became so plentiful that it fetched but threepence, twopence, and even a penny a pound*. But in the plain it was exactly the same. In the extensive forests of the Prince of Tour and Taxis, with whom

* The circumference of the chase was about sixty English miles. The Count calculated that in a few years he would be able to shoot there *every year* three hundred roebucks, eighty (warrantable) stags, and one hundred chamois. It must however be said, that there is not a better sportsman to be found than Count Arco, and that such a state of things could only be brought about in so short a time by his excellent management. He had twenty-four gamekeepers, all picked men, fellows as fearless and daring as they were excellent hunters. In the short time that the chase was in the Count's hands, they had shot seven poachers in conflicts with them. One of the keepers, he who had killed four, was himself shot soon afterwards at Berchtesgaden. The neighbourhood of the Tyrol was the cause of this influx of poachers. They would come across the frontier at the Kaiser Klause and Fallep, and were at once on Bavarian territory.

I have enjoyed the privilege of shooting for the last ten years, all the red-deer have been destroyed. From forty-five to fifty-two or fifty-three good stags were shot every season, and now there are not half-a-dozen in the whole forest range. Although the peasantry may occasionally have had to complain of the super-abundance of game in the lowlands, there could be no excuse for this total destruction of the chamois, which from its habits could do no possible injury to the crops of the husbandman. The higher mountains were their dwelling-place, and the herbs they found on their green sides, with the young sprouts of the latschen*, afforded them nourishment. But the intoxication caused by the possession of a new right blinded the peasantry even to their own profit and advantage; and rather than let a chase for a good price, as is done with the moors in Scotland, they harried the game, and, having depopulated the mountains, find at last that what might have proved a constant source of profit and pleasure is now thoroughly exhausted. But excess characterizes every social revolution. It is, too, the very spirit all proscriptions that they be carried on unrelentingly, and with a view

* *Latschen—Pinus Pumilio*—is a sort of pine found on the mountains, growing on their barren sides or out of the crevices of the rocks. It does not at once grow upwards, but creeps along the ground for some distance before its branches rise perpendicularly. Its foliage is dense and bushy, and forms a good covert for the game. This shrub might be called "The Hunter's Friend," for on its boughs he may always rely, as they never break with the strongest pull. He must only be careful not to bend them, for then they snap at once.

to extermination; and the red-deer and chamois became suddenly a proscribed race; a ban was upon them, and none escaped but those that fled into the deepest recesses of the forest, or sought an asylum among the inaccessible fastnesses of the mountains. Their names stood first on the dread list of the victims who were to fall; and so the people rose with a shout to take their life indiscriminately wherever they might find them.

The assistant forester was not at home; nothing therefore was to be learned about the probability of getting a shot. He had been out on the mountains for several days, but was expected home that evening. While at supper we learnt that he was returned, and a little later, after having changed his dress, he made his appearance.

"Well, Berger, good evening!" said the kind old head forester, as he entered; "you have had bad weather—eh? Now, sit down. What have you seen?"

"On the Wendelstein yesterday I saw a good chamois buck at about two hundred yards distant. I could only just see the haunch, but still I would have fired, only I had not set the hair-trigger."

"And you met nobody?"

"No, all is quiet. It was terribly cold up on the Wendelstein, and the weather has been as bad as it could be."

"Well, Berger, do you think there is any likelihood of getting a shot at a chamois when the weather clears up?"

"Yes; chamois are there, that 's certain; and on the Miesing is the best place," he said, turning to me. "We 'll go up the Steinberg, and then stalk up the steep part near the latschen. I think we are pretty sure of a shot,—if only all has been quiet, and no poachers have been there to disturb them."

"Well, if the rain ceases and the weather clears, we will start tomorrow early. When you are ready, call me."

At least twenty times that day I had been to the window, peering, or rather trying to peer, through the clouds of mist, to see if no blue sky were visible. Sometimes the heads of the opposite mountains—the Klein Miesing, the Jäger Kamm, and others—would show themselves just above the gloomy mantle whose undulating folds floated around them; but then the spirit of the storm would come sweeping on to recover his supremacy, bringing up an array of dim clouds from the chasms that divided the mountains, and soon all was again enveloped in impenetrable gloom. It had rained the whole of that day and the preceding night in sullen perseverance, and there seemed no hope of change; when in the afternoon the wind gave sign of his approach, for fragments of mist like flying banners came hurrying past, and bearing down on the cohorts of clouds that had, till now, in sturdy masses defied the sun, tore great rents through them, and sent them flying in all directions. How glad we were of his victory, and how we rejoiced to see the scattered remnants of that vast army of clouds trying in vain to

re-assemble! The strong wind put them utterly to the rout. We now saw that snow had fallen on the tops of the mountains. Over the flat land the sun was again visible, and there was every prospect of fine weather on the morrow. We looked out again at night, and the firmament was strewn with stars. What more could we desire?

CHAPTER VI.

UP THE MIESING.

The morning was clear and bright, and not a breath of wind was stirring,—an essential thing for the chamois hunter; for if the air be not calm, all his skill, perseverance, and daring will avail him nothing. At best even it is difficult to calculate on the gusts that will sometimes come suddenly rushing up a chasm, or sweeping downwards just as he gets round the shoulder of a mountain. Thus, when he thinks all is won, and he rejoices in his panting heart at the success which is about to crown his labour, the taint of his presence will be borne along on the rippling air, and the herd on whom for the last hour his longing eye has been so intently fixed looks round affrighted, conscious of the neighbourhood of an enemy, utters a shrill whistle, and, mounting over the sharp ridge of an opposite mountain, is seen for one moment in bold relief against the sky, and then disappears on the other side. But we had no cause to fear that our hopes would be marred by such a circumstance.

Whilst I breakfasted Berger got ready the rifles; for not having calculated on being able to go out here, I had not brought mine with me. We went past the little chapel of Birkenstein, whither many a pilgrim resorts, and on through pleasant meadows shut in by gentle slopes covered with wood. And now we emerge into a broad valley, and before us is the Miesing, and to the left the Wendelstein, with its high conical summit, whence, according to the song, may be seen the two tall church towers* "of the great city where the King dwells." It is a striking feature in the mountain-chain, for, though not the highest of the peaks, it seems to be so, rising as it does abruptly and and alone. A few cottages were clustered together beside a stream at no great distance from our path, and cattle were grazing in the several fields, while a little peasant boy poured forth his orisons, for such I took his gladsome song to be, in that fair temple not built by human hands.

As we went along, the neighbouring mountains suggested many a tale of interest to the hunter. "There," said Berger, pointing to a wood on our right half-way down the hill-side,—"there, two years ago, was a stag of sixteen. Such a stag! his antlers were splendid; and what a size he was!"

"And who shot him?" I asked.

"That I don't know. The foresters saw him often, and could have shot him many a morning had they liked; but Count Arco had given strict orders to

* Of the church of Our Lady in Munich.

forbid them, and at last he was seen no more. He disappeared suddenly,—most likely the poachers got him. It was such a hart as will not often be seen."

And some distance further on:—"Up yonder to the left, quite at the top of the mountain, I one day shot three chamois."

"How did you manage that?"

"Why, first I shot two, right and left; and then, knowing where the others would cross the mountain, I ran forward to meet them, and sure enough they came as I expected, and just as I was re-loading too. I was ready with one barrel, and shot a third. Had I thought of my pistol I might have brought down a fourth, for one stood not twenty paces from me."

"What!" I asked, "do you carry a pistol with you?"

"Yes, always," he replied, drawing a double-barrelled revolver (with four barrels) out of his pocket: "one must always be prepared for whatever may happen; and with that, if I only have a place to lean against, I should not mind one or two."

"But do the poachers attack you if you do not begin with them?"

"Their hearts are set on the Jägers' guns: their own are not good for much, and they know that ours are, and they would rather get one of them than almost anything. And they 'd give us a good thrashing too, if they could," he added, laughing; "and you know to be half beaten to death is not so very agreeable. Besides, if you meet with such fellows in a

hut, where everything is so close together, and there is little room to move, you cannot do much with a rifle, it 's too long—in close quarters like that a pistol may do good service."

"But how did you bring down your three chamois?"

"One I put in my rücksack, and the other two, as there was snow on the ground, I dragged down. On the Wendelstein once I shot a chamois, and afterwards a roebuck. The chamois I put in the sack, and the buck across it over my shoulders. One can carry almost anything so, and capitally too."

We now came to the broad path or mountain way that leads up the Miesing, made to enable the woodcutters to bring down the wood in winter, as well as for the cattle which in the summer months are driven up to the high pasturages. Beside us, on our left, a clear stream was falling over the blocks of stone that had tumbled into its channel, and beyond it rose a wall of rock, well-nigh perpendicular, eight hundred feet or more. This was the Gems Wand, a famous place in other days ere the new laws had been put in force, and where, on ledges so narrow that it seemed a bird only might cling there for some moments, the chamois were always to be seen, standing at gaze or stepping carelessly along. But now the rock was indeed desolate. Over the face of this high wall of stone were scattered the friendly latschen, with here and there a pine that had been able to twist its roots into some gaping crevice. It was as nearly perpendi-

cular as might be, and, except that the strata of rock formed projecting ridges, there was hardly a footing to be obtained. However, if there are latschen one may climb almost anywhere. We stopped occasionally to look across with our glasses and scan its rocky face, in order to see if perchance a solitary buck were loitering there alone. But not a thing, animate or inanimate, was stirring. As I looked up at the precipice I observed to Berger, "To get along there would be no easy matter—eh? What think you, could you manage it?"

"I went along there some time ago, when out with Mr. * * *. He wounded a chamois, and it climbed upwards along the wall. It was difficult work, for there was nothing to hold on by; and what grass I found was not firm, and gave way in my grasp. Once I was rather uncomfortable, for while hanging to the rock with both arms raised my rifle swung forward over my arm."

"Ay, that is a horrid situation; let go your hold you dare not; and how to get the rifle back again one does not know either. When it swings down and knocks against the rock, it almost makes one lose all balance. The rifle is sadly in the way in such difficult places. Without it——"

"Oh, without it," said Berger, interrupting me, "one could go any and everywhere. Without it I could climb through the world. The rifle makes an immense difference. But, as I was saying, at last I got up and reached the chamois. The coming down,

was the worst part. However, I took another way than in going up. I pulled off my shoes, for you can then feel your ground better, and take hold of every little projection with your toes."

"But that must have hurt you terribly?"

"No; I was then accustomed to go barefoot, and would formerly much rather have climbed so than down with thick nailed shoes on. Once before I came down yonder wall from over the ridge: it was ugly work, I can tell you. We drove the game that day, and I had to go over the top and roll down stones to make the chamois cross to the other side."

We had now wound upwards for about an hour, when we left the path and turned off to our right among some latschen and huge blocks of stone. We had not gone many yards when Berger dropped to the earth, as though a shot had passed through his heart. He raised his finger to indicate silence, his eyes were opened wide with expectation, and his lips drawn apart as if uttering a "Hush!" though not a breath passed over them. We cowered behind the stones, and he whispered, "There are chamois!" We crept on a little further; the end of my pole shod with iron touched a stone and made the metal slightly ring. Berger turned round with a reproving look, and made me a sign to exchange mine for his, which was not shod. We advanced and lay behind a bush, and drew out our glasses. Five chamois were there, grazing on the slope, skirted by a wood. Berger's whole frame was alive with expectation; his face wore quite

a different expression to what it had before; his eyes seemed larger, his body more supple, his powers of motion other than in everyday life—the whole creature was changed. "Now then," he said, "come along, quick *und schön stad!*" (quickly and *nicely quiet*). We moved on, but a breath of air stirred, and they must have got wind of us, for they began to move towards the wood, and soon disappeared within it. There was now nothing to be done but to go round and get above them, for it was late, and the current of air had already set in from below. Just as we had reached the top I heard a slight rustle, and stopped to listen; when in an instant there was a rushing down the steep and over the broken ground as of an animal in full flight. By the step I was sure it was deer (hinds), and said so to Berger. "They were not chamois—they made too much noise; nor was it the rush of a stag. It must have been a hind."

"You are right," he cried; "there they go! I see them down below—two hinds—they heard us moving along above them."

"Do you think they will take the chamois along with them?"

"No, I think not. We shall most likely meet them further on; if not, we will sit and watch for them."

This is one of the great difficulties of stalking in the mountains,—to do so almost unheard. Fragments of stone are lying about, latschen with their long trailing branches and dense foliage, or steep beds of

*Geröll**, cross your path, which the lightest step will set in motion, and yet you must advance quickly, and pick your way quite noiselessly. I always found the exertion and attention this required fatigued me more than climbing for a longer time when such caution was unnecessary.

As nothing more was to be seen of the five chamois we had met with on the Steinberg, we sat down and peered into the vast hollow that lay before us. Rising upwards to our left was barren rock, sharp and broken, grey, bare, and weather-beaten: it looked hoary with age.

Where the rocks ceased to be perpendicular the geröll began, and continued far downwards, till here and there latschen began to show themselves. We sat in silence, examining with strained eyes every inch of ground, and looking down among the stunted bushes, and upwards among the crags, in hopes of seeing a chamois that might be lured forth by the cheering sun. From time to time, as one of us fancied that some spot at a distance looked like the object of his search, suddenly out flew the glass, and the other, full of hope and expectation, with eyes turned from the mountain-side to his comrade's face, would watch his countenance as he looked through the telescope, to learn, before he spoke, if a chamois

* *Geröll.* Loose rolling stones on the side of a mountain, like the lava on the sides of a volcano. At every step the whole mass gives way beneath your tread, and slides downwards, carrying you with it. The difficulty therefore of crossing such Geröll without noise may be conceived.

were there or not. He needed not to say, "'T is nothing!" the other saw this at once, by his expression. But when the glass remained up to the eye some seconds longer than usual, and the Jäger, as he still looked, said, "'T is chamois! there are three together!" how exciting was the expectation. The glass of each would then instantly be turned in the same direction, to find the spot on which the hopes of both were now centred. "I have them! One is at rest; the one to the right is a yearling, I think. Now it's among the latschen; now—now he has come forward again. What high horns that other one has!"

Such are the remarks to be heard on these occasions, made in a subdued voice, uttered quickly, and broken into short sentences—mere ejaculations called forth by the stir of the emotion, by the feelings of the moment, and leaving no time for them to be fashioned into a connected form. But neither of us heard from the other such pleasant tidings; and after having eaten a slice of brown bread and a morsel of goat's-milk cheese, we slung our rifles over our shoulders, and each taking his staff went down the mountain.

We looked around on all sides, but not a chamois was to be seen. Before us rose the Roth Wand, now (October 10th) covered with snow; on a verdant patch of pasture-land where we stood was a solitary hut, long deserted; and on the mountain-side, to our right, it seemed as if some fiend had dug his nails into the ground, and torn away from top to bottom all the earth that he could clutch. Right through the green

latschen came a long broad strip of loose stones, some hundred feet in width.

On going along at the foot of this geröll, Berger suddenly stopped; and dropping behind a large block of stone, whispered, "There's a chamois!" High up among the *débris* a black spot was visible, and this was the chamois. We saw by our glasses that it was a yearling buck, and for a time watched him at our ease, as we lay on the ground protected by the fragment of fallen rock. It stood at gaze for a moment.

"Does it see us?" I asked; "does it look this way?"

"No," said Berger; "but the thing is, how to get near it. Up the stones we can't go—it will make too much noise; and if we cross over the crest of the mountain, and so work down towards him, it will be too far to fire. If we could only get up through the latschen! but I fear it is impossible, he would be sure to see us. However, let us try: be still, very still."

We were just on the point of making the attempt, when, on looking round to scan the sides of the Roth Wand, I saw a chamois about five hundred feet below the summit, on a green spot quite free from snow, and at the foot of a wall of rock. "Hist, Berger! there are chamois!"

"Where?"

"Look up yonder; don't you see them?"

"No."

"Look, don't you see a black spot, right across

to the right of the geröll and the snow. Now it moves! There is another!—one, two, three!"

"I see them now! Confound it, they see us! Let us move on—don't stop or look; keep away from them, up to the right." And up we went, keeping in a contrary direction, and then stopped among some large loose stones.

"Look, Berger! now you can see them well; they are crossing the snow, but not quickly. What! don't you see them? Why now they are moving round the wall of rock that goes down quite perpendicularly; yet now I see but two,—where can the third be?"

"Now I see them. Give me your glass: make haste and reach those latschen yonder; when once among them, all's right. I'll lie here and watch them, and come after you directly. But for heaven's sake get up the geröll quietly, for if a stone move they'll surely hear it, though so far off; and be quick, and get among the latschen." Giving him my telescope, which was much the better one, I moved on over the slanting mass of loose stones.

With body bent as low as possible I tried to creep noiselessly upwards. I dared not use my pole to steady myself, for the weight would have forced it among the loose rubble, and made as much or more noise than my footsteps occasioned. Taking it in my left hand, on which side also my rifle was slung, I steadied myself with the right, and so at last reached some larger fragments of stone, which were firmer to the tread, and over which I could consequently get

along more rapidly. The sheltering latschen were at length gained, and I flung myself down behind them, quite out of breath with excitement and from moving thus doubled up together.

In this safe haven Berger soon joined me. "They are at rest," he said. "Now all 's right! we have them now! But how shall we get across?" he asked, as he looked around to reconnoitre our position. "Yonder they'll see us; we must pass over the ridge above, and go round and see if there is a way."

This we did, and, once on the other side, kept just sufficiently low down to prevent our heads being seen above the sky-line. But after advancing some hundred yards, we came to a spot where the ridge swept suddenly downwards, forming a gap between us and the chamois. To proceed without being seen was impossible. On our right it was rather steep, but we were obliged to descend a good way, and then the same distance up again further on, in order to reach the Roth Wand unobserved.

"Here we are at last! Are they still at rest, Berger? just look across through the branches of yonder latschen above you."

"Yes, they are still there! Now then, we must get to the pinnacle right over our heads, and then along the ridge, and so have a shot at them from above."

The shoulder of the mountain where we stood was steep enough certainly, but it still presented sufficient inequalities to enable us to clamber up it. Elsewhere,

except on this projecting buttress-like shoulder, the declivity was so steep as to be not many degrees from the perpendicular. I proposed therefore that we should choose this less steep ridge to reach the broken rocks above us, on whose jagged forms we might obtain a firm hold, and so creep upwards to the very crest of the mountain. "Oh no," answered Berger; "we dare not venture that: they would be sure to see us, for we should be quite unsheltered, and our bodies being thrown against the sky would be distinctly visible. No, we must try yonder—up that *lahne**," pointing to the steep declivity before us, to see the summit of which it was necessary to fling the head quite backwards. I confess it was not with the pleasantest feelings that I saw what we had undertaken; for the slope was covered with snow, making the ascent doubly difficult, and upwards of two thousand feet below was a huge rocky chasm, into which I could look and calculate where I might at last stop, if my foot slipped and I happened to go sliding down. Where the lahne ended beds of loose stones began; and, as if to remind one of their instability, and how hopeless it would be to think of

* *Lahnen* are smooth steep declivities covered with long grass. In the summer, when this rank herbage has been dried by the sun and air, it is so slippery that a firm footing is almost impossible; and in winter such an ascent is not made more practicable by its covering of snow. When slipping on such a lahne you shoot downwards as on one of those artificial mountains or slides which form a favourite amusement in Russia. They not unfrequently rise above a precipice; a false step here, therefore, and a miracle only can save you from going over into the abyss.

holding fast even for a moment on their moving surface, there rose from minute to minute a low dull sound, made by some rolling stone, which, set in motion by its own weight, went pattering downwards into the melancholy hollow.

However, to stand looking upwards at the steep snowy surface of the mountain, or gazing at the depth below, was not the way to get a shot at the chamois; so giving my rifle a jerk to send it well up behind my back, and leave the left arm free, I began to mount, keeping in an oblique direction in order to lessen the steepness of the ascent. Berger was before me, sometimes on his hands and knees, sometimes on his feet, and looking every now and then anxiously behind to see what progress I made. Neither of us got on very fast, for a firm footing was impossible. If you slipped, down you came on your face, with both feet nowhere, and the rifle swinging over the left arm into the snow, most inconveniently. Once, when I was quite unable to plant either foot firmly, Berger, who was just above me, and had, as it seemed, a safe spot on which to stand, was obliged to let down his long pole that I might hold on by it, and, with his heels well dug into the ground, gave me a helping pull. We had mounted half-way when suddenly both my feet lost their hold on the snow, and somehow or other down I went over the steep declivity on my back, like an arrow sent from a strongly-drawn bow. It was disagreeable, for I knew how difficult it is to stop when once gliding at full speed down a lahne; and all my en-

deavours to do so, with help of my heels or my hands, were ineffectual. But I remembered the advice my friend Kobell had once given me: "Should you ever be unlucky enough to slip when upon a lahne, turn round so as to get on your stomach as quickly as possible, or else you are lost." While shooting downwards therefore I turned, and grasping my stick, which was well shod with an iron point, I dashed it with all my force into the ground. It stuck fast; I held on by it, and was stopped in my career. While gliding down, my eyes were turned upwards to Berger. I saw fright expressed on his countenance: our eyes met, but neither uttered a word. Only when I had arrested my further progress, and was cautiously preparing to find a sure footing, he called out, "It was lucky you were able to stop—for heaven's sake be careful, it is dreadfully slippery." At last, by making a zigzag line, we reached the top of the lahne. Here were rocks by which we could hold, and getting amongst them came to a perpendicular wall about seven feet high. Its face was as straight as a plummet-line, but it was rough, so that some crevices were to be found which might serve as steps in passing over it. At its base was a small ledge, on which one person could stand, holding on with his own face and the face of the rock close against each other, and behind, below, was—what was not quite pleasant to think about. Berger got over first, having previously with one hand laid his rifle and pole on a ledge of rock above him to have both hands free. Handing up my

rifle to him, I followed; and though the place seemed rather formidable, in reality it was easy enough to climb. As I stood on the ledge face to face with the perpendicular rock, I debated within myself whether I should look behind me or not. I knew that below and behind was nothing but air, and I decided on proceeding without turning round; so I looked for the most favourable crack or roughness in the rock to make a first step, which moment of delay Berger attributed to indecision and to fear; and stretching out his hand to me, he cried roughly, "Come, what are you thinking of? give me your hand,—that's right. Now then!" He was wrong in his supposition, for I was neither undecided nor afraid, but he feared that if I grew alarmed I might let go my hold; and as the moment was critical he thought to rouse and reassure me by his manner, and by holding my hand firmly in his grasp. "Patience, Berger! patience! I shall be up in a second; I am only looking for a place to put my foot on; don't think I am giddy. There, now I am up." And then one of us, lying down at full length, reached with one arm over the ledge of rock, to the spot below where the rifles and poles were lying.

With bended bodies we now stole along the crest of the mountain as noiselessly as possible, for the chamois were below us on our left, just over the ridge. We presently looked over. I could not see them, on account of a projecting rock, but Berger whispered, "There they are! Quick! they are moving." Still

Comp.v. Th. Horschelt. Gedr.im J.B. Kuhn's Lith.Anstalt, München. Lith.v F. Hohe

as we were, they must have heard us coming upon them, and, suspecting danger, were already in motion. But they had not yet whistled. By "craning" over, as a fox-hunter would say, I just obtained a glimpse of one far below me on a small green spot, and standing at gaze. To fire in this position however was impossible. Berger, all impatience and fearing they would escape, was in a fever of anxiety. "Look here! can you see them now?" as with the left foot planted on a crag not larger than the palm of my hand, I stood as it were in the air, immediately above the spot where the chamois were. A crack from my rifle was the answer. To aim nearly straight downwards is always more difficult than in any other direction, and standing as I did made it much more so; but still I thought I had hit him.

"He remains behind," cried Berger; "you have hit him! Well done! 'Faith, that *was* a good shot—a hundred and thirty yards at least. Quick, quick! we may get a shot at the others as they go over yonder rocks;" and darting up the ridge before him, he ran on along the edge of the precipice as if it had been on a broad highway. At another time, without a rifle in my hand, I should have followed him with caution; but the excitement of the hunter was upon me, impelling me to undertake anything, and I sprang after him, and on along the edge, driven forwards by a longing and a thirst and craving which made everything seem possible.

"There they are! they're crossing that patch of

snow. Now they 're stopping again—but too far off; let us go back and look after the wounded one."

The wounded chamois was standing some distance further down than when I had fired. It was evident by his look that he was very ill—*sehr krank*, to translate literally the German expression made use of in like circumstances. Stretched out at full length upon the rocks, we looked over the edge, and examined him with our glasses. We saw distinctly where the ball had struck him,—rather high up behind the shoulder. He presently moved off, crossed the snow, and getting among the latschen, after turning round four or five times, lay down. "All 's right now; we must let him rest for an hour. Let me see; it is half-past two exactly. We 'll try then and get nearer to him. But where can we get down?" said Berger; "here it is impossible."

"A little further on, I think, we may manage it; some latschen are there, and they will help us. But let us stop a little; there is no hurry, and if we wait some time it will be all the better."

I now looked around me. The scene was magnificent. The spot on which I stood was near six thousand feet high; and to the south the view was bounded by ranges of mountains covered with snow, whose peaks rose up one behind the other in every variety of abruptness. Over the vast fields of snow fell here and there a broad shadow, and the brilliant whiteness of the peaks facing us formed a strong contrast with the darker sides that looked towards the east. With

my glass every snow-drift was distinctly visible, and terrific places amongst those awful solitudes where no living creature had ever moved. Stretching far out to our left they formed an amphitheatre before us; and behind, all distant view being shut out by the Miesing, was the valley between the mountains, where, just visible among the rocks, the deep blue of the Soen Lake showed how clear the air was, and how bright the sky. Opposite this lake the sides of the Miesing were covered with the dark green of the latschen; but nearer to where we stood all was desolation:—against the sky the barren and blasted rock, and thence to its foot a bed of loose rolling stones, cold and monotonous in hue. But it was towards the distant mountains that I turned and gazed, and yet never could see enough. And then again I looked at them through my glass, and peered into their dark places, and at their bold projections, and at their very highest pinnacles, as though I might at last be enabled to unravel the mystery—to discover something that might clear the doubts, and so remove the strange awe that hung over and around them. And still I looked, and watched, and pondered, and the spell that bound my gaze grew stronger, and I could not turn away. For me mountains have a fascination; and in their presence I sit down, and with fixed look scan their unexplored summits, not in wonder, but with an overwhelming sense of awe at the frozen stillness of their deserts, so far beyond the sphere of all human sympathy,—where all life has ceased, and where nothing

ever moves, save the storm and the avalanche. It is not a region of death, for death speaks to us of change; but it is one of numbness and rigidity,—of life that, once warm, has become still and stark. It produces an effect as different from ordinary death as the sight of the motionless soldier on the plains of Russia, still standing upright and looking as though yet alive, differs from that feeling awakened by death in any other form. He with the scythe and the hour-glass *kills*,—he *destroys* life and turns it into death; but that power which sits on the frozen mountain-tops seizes on warm life and enlocks it in a glaze which chills vitality, while the semblance of life remains. It is not of *death* these icy solitudes remind you, but of *benumbed life*.

Berger came and roused me from my musing. He took my telescope, and looked at the plains of snow on the distant mountains. He too felt all the magnificence of the scene, and gazed around him with delight. Then awoke in him the longing to climb some vast mountain, where difficulties were to be overcome such as men who had once encountered them like not to think of, and who, while they relate, feel a shuddering and a fear. "I never was on such a one," he said, "but I should like to venture. If only *once* I could see such places!" And I told him of the Ortler Spitz, deemed inaccessible until a few years ago, when an old chamois-hunter found a way to its icy summit; and how a short time afterwards he went up again with his son, that he too might find the path when the father

was gone, and that thus the knowledge might not die with the old hunter; and how the son, a youth of eighteen, had said there were places to be passed that made his flesh creep as he hung over them; and how he vowed at the time, as he stood amid the frightful chasms and walls of ice, while his heart almost ceased to beat for very horror, that if God should let him reach the green valleys alive, no power on earth should ever make him attempt the dreadful way again. And as I related Berger stood before me with lips apart, and his very eyes were listening, as he heard of those unvisited regions which had for him such a mighty charm, and inspired so inscrutable a longing.

But it was time to look after our chamois. We went forward to the place I had indicated as being the one where we might best descend from the summit of the mountain. The spot was steep enough, but there were latschen growing about, and wherever they are found anything may be undertaken.

"Let us mark the place well where he is lying," said Berger, "otherwise we shall not find him when once down below: as we have no dog we must be careful what we are about. Let me see! he is just below yonder high piece of rock with the tall latschen."

"Look, Berger," I said; "from the top of the Roth Wand a line of rough-pointed rocks stretch downwards to the valley."

"Well, I see them."

"They form two ridges beside each other. Now, over the second ridge the chamois is at rest. If

we mark those high ridges well, we cannot be at fault."

And observing attentively the form of the rock where we now stood, in order that it might afterwards serve as a landmark, we prepared to descend. Berger went first over the bed of geröll. He stopped a moment, and said, "Now give me your rifle; you'll get on then much more easily." He slung it over his shoulder with his own, when suddenly his foot slipped, and down he went, sliding on his back over the loose stones; and, though he turned himself round immediately, was quite unable to arrest his progress. At the foot of the bed of stones there was fortunately no precipice, or over it he would most certainly have gone.

"Are you hurt, Berger?" I asked, when at last he stopped.

"No," he answered, laughing. "But what a noise it made! how the stones came rattling down! Now then, carefully! Stop! Rest one foot against my pole; it is planted firmly, and will bear your weight!"

"Quick, Berger! quick! take care;" and at the same moment down came a great stone that had been loosened, and dashed by close to his shin. But he moved his foot, and it passed without striking him. We had proceeded some distance, and the question now was, "Where is the chamois?" The rocky ridge was close to our right hand, but every feature looked different when seen from below to what it had done before.

"He must be on the other side, just over that rock."

"No, he is certainly lower down," I answered. "Look! we are still comparatively near the summit of the mountain; and if you remember, from thence it seemed some distance to where he was at rest; from yonder ridge however we should certainly catch sight of him." Having clambered thither, Berger suddenly exclaimed, "Hist! there he is! It is far, but still within range: take your time!" The report of my rifle thundered among the rocks, and again and again it reverberated, till at last, like thunder heard afar still faintly rolling, it gradually died away.

"You have missed him!"

"That I don't think. I had him capitally, and the rifle went off just as I could wish; I was as steady too as possible."

"It may be; but you see, he is moving away," said Berger gloomily.

"I see he is going; but he moves quite differently now. Look, he staggers; his step is uncertain, is it not?"

"He is off nevertheless."

"Well, I'll go to the spot where he was standing, and then we shall soon see whether I have missed or not."

There we found hair strewn about, and a pool of fresh blood. At the sight of it Berger's face cleared up, and with light hearts we followed the slot of the wounded animal. The snow was dyed red where he had passed, and the herbage was wet and crimsoned on both sides of his path.

"He cannot be far off, Berger," I said; "look at the blood. That 's the right colour—deep red! Here he stopped for a moment; but how strange that with two such shots he should still climb that rock!"

Mounting over a block of stone, Berger looked down among the rocks, and presently cried out, "There he lies!" I soon joined him, and looked at the spot where he had made his last effort and had given his dying leap. We slid down and stood before our chamois. My first ball had gone right through the body in an oblique direction downwards; the second too was well lodged. We laid our rifles aside, and Berger, taking out his hunting-knife, prepared to *gralloch* the chamois. It was a doe, that had no kid. I looked around while Berger was busied with his work, to see the wild spot whither the chamois had led us. It was a narrow chasm among the rocks; behind us the high, grey, weather-beaten walls rising perpendicularly, and below a slope of barren stones of all forms and sizes flung together indiscriminately.

The chamois cleaned, I opened my rücksack, and laying it on the ground, put our chamois into it—all four feet together, and the head hanging out of the opening in the middle. Berger lifted it on my shoulders, and then, staff in hand, we went down over that wild sea of stones. Though such a chamois as I had shot that day might not weigh more than 40 lb., it is still an impediment to one's free movements where the road to be traversed is uneven or difficult: such a dead weight settles down and hangs against

your back more heavily than would be imagined. But when once the road was gained that led to the valley, we tripped along with footsteps as light even as our hearts were, and beguiled the downward path with recounting the thousand episodes of our epic of that day. It began to be dark as we reached the meadows in the vale; but that mattered little, for we had intended not to return to Fischbachau the same evening, but to stop at the village of Baierisch Zell, at the foot of the mountains, and ask a night's shelter and hospitality of the Solachers—a family well known to all who in those parts had ever watched for the stag in the forest, or climbed up the mountain-sides after the chamois.

A light was shining from out the cottage window; we crossed the trout-stream that flowed before the garden, and, passing the little wicket, were at once at the door of the old hunter's dwelling. We laid the chamois upon the stones, and lifting the latch went in, and were met with hearty and friendly welcomings.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER THE CHASE. THE SOLACHERS.

To every one who has followed the chamois or the red-deer in the Highlands of Bavaria, the name of Solacher is a familiar word. And though he may not have carried a rifle in those parts, yet if he be a lover of the chase, that name will still have reached his ears, and be known to him in connection with many a story of adventurous climbing, of desperate encounter with poachers, and of trophies borne off from the shooting-matches at Munich or the village festivals. If, when sitting round the table of the little inn of an evening, you hear some old fellow telling when the last bear was seen in the mountains, and whence he came, and how great the excitement when the news ran of his arrival, you may be sure it was a Solacher who was first in the pursuit, and that, whether they killed the monster or not, to one of that name the honour of the day was due.

Each and all of them have been "hunters of the

hills," shunning the plain, and any other occupation save that hard one which they have always followed—father, son, grandchildren, and uncles. The name of Solacher to the hunter of the chamois in Bavaria is like that of Napier with us in England,—*it carries with it reputation:* we at once expect to hear of pre-eminence in him who bears it; and we look as certainly for boldness of deed in a Solacher as we do for boldness of thought, of action, or of word, from one who is a Napier. A Solacher is an authority in all matters of the chase in the mountains. They all have been hunters from their youth upwards; from their first childhood they have heard exciting stories of the chase, and have been fed with traditions of the times before them. To follow the chamois is, with them, rather an instinct than a passion; the air of the mountain-tops seems their proper element, and they have preferred that, and freedom of breathing and of limb, to all beside where these were not to be obtained.

Max, with whom I became acquainted later, told me how once a nobleman had proposed to take him into his service, and made him very advantageous offers. And on my asking if he had not been inclined to accept them, he laughed at the thought, and said, "What! quit the mountains! why I don't think I should be able to endure it for a day. Had he offered me ten times as much I should have refused. For my part, I can't imagine a happier life than that of a forester; I know very well that *I* would not change with anybody in the world!" And thus they

are all; the very maidens look upon a hunter's life as the most enviable lot that could fall to the share of man; and the daring climber, the skilful stalker, and the sure shot, are sure of due appreciation at their hands. All such do they hold in high honour. They speak of their brothers with genuine sisterly pride, and right pleasant it is to hear them.

At the same moment with ourselves these daughters entered the room of the cottage. They had, it seems, been to a neighbouring village wake, and had only just returned. It was dark when we came in, but now a light was brought; and as I turned suddenly to look at her whose voice and friendly manner had already prepossessed me, I was struck by the beauty that was close beside me, and bursting at once upon me through the dispersing gloom. It took me by surprise, and she must have been other than a woman not to have rightly interpreted my long astonished gaze. There was not even a shade of coquetry about her; if there had been, she would have kept on her becoming green hat a minute or two longer; but she smiled on seeing the mischief she had done, and with friendly words inquired where we had been.

She was of commanding height, this fine-featured second sister, and the long dark-coloured cloth cloak made her look still taller. It was simply drawn together at the throat; and, falling in natural folds closely over her shoulders, gave dignity to the figure without preventing you from discovering the outline of the womanly form. On her head she wore the

picturesque high-crowned green hat peculiar to these valleys, over the brim hung the tassel of green and gold, and at the side were a bright red rose and other artificial flowers. Her braided brown hair showed itself beneath the broad brim of the hat; and as I afterwards looked at her finely-marked features, and at the beautiful outline running from the tip of the ear to the chin—which by the way is more seldom seen in perfection than any other part of the face—I could not help thinking that such a bonnie green hat was, after all, the most becoming head-gear a girl could wear.

But beside the full-blown flower was another, a full bud just about to unfold and burst into opening loveliness. It was the youngest sister—Marie. She hardly ventured to raise her large dark eyes to the stranger, and quickly left the room to lay aside her hat and cloak. She returned however soon after; and never did I so earnestly endeavour to inspire confidence as now, when doing my best to win trust in my good faith from this sweet-mannered village maiden. It was difficult at first to entice her into conversation; but later, when she saw that the rough-looking creature before her was gentle in his demeanour, and treated her with comely deference, she would gradually lift her eyes as she smiled a reply; and eventually, though timidly at first, would let them rest full and fearlessly on the stranger's countenance. Yet later, when our supper came, and I begged them all to sit at table and sup with us, I could not prevail on

this coy girl to eat with me, or drink out of my cup. It was not fitting that she should do so, she answered; yet when my companion made her the same offer, she at once accepted it, and laughed and chatted with him right merrily. If I could only have made her believe that I too was an assistant forester; or, by my faith, have really become one for that modest lassie's sake!

The eldest of the sisters was no beauty, but there was an open honesty about her—indeed this they all had—and she possessed a store of such genuine, healthy, sound common sense, that I always liked to talk with her. She was a famous knitter; and many of the peculiar sort of stockings, richly ornamented, worn by the young foresters both far and near, have been produced by her skilful fingers.

The three sisters lived here together with an old aunt—a Solacher, in whose withered features lines were still to be seen which proved that, in bygone days, she might have been counted among the fairest of the dale. She was tall, and still walked erect; she spoke little, and all her household duties were done in stern silence. The elder brother, the chief of the family, was not at home: he had gone to Munich to be present at the great annual shooting-match, and was expected back on the morrow. In former days, when game was abundant on the hills, the gentlemen who came here to shoot would take up their quarters in the dwelling of this respectable family. Prince L * * * was constantly here, and the Princess too would accompany

him. The Countess D * * * and her daughters would also remain here for weeks together; they enjoyed the beautiful scenery around, and loved the simplicity and kindly-proffered service of their peasant hostesses. Nor do I wonder they so liked them, for gentle-mannered they are all.

The cottage is their own, and the pasturage around it, as well as the trout-stream that runs beside the garden. The building is low, having only one story and the ground-floor; but it is roomy, and, like all houses built of wood, extremely warm. It had been bought and given to them by a few of the gentlemen who used to stay there, in proof of their regard for the worthy old forester, and as a means of rendering a lasting service to his family. They spoke of the circumstance with evident satisfaction, and perfect freedom from all false shame; on the contrary, they rightly looked on the gift as an honourable token how much their father had been respected. The beams and wainscot of the room where we sat were dark with age; the usual bench ran round the sides, as well as round the stove, which occupied a large space; and in one corner was a small square table where we sat and supped.

When I went out into the kitchen I found Berger busily occupied with Nanny, the second sister, in preparing our meal. As usual he was full of fun; and while making the dumplings, or boiling the potatoes, he was joking with his pretty helpmate, and laughing so heartily that it was quite a pleasure to hear him.

We cooked the liver of our chamois, roasted a piece of venison that was luckily in the house, and with our dumplings and potatoes served up a right famous supper. And how we enjoyed it! If anything were wanted besides my wolfish appetite to give it a zest, this was furnished by Berger's fun and merriment. How he contrived to satisfy his hunger as he did, and yet to talk so much, was to me a mystery. Now he would play Marie some trick, who would give him a gentle pat as a punishment, while her laughing mouth—laughing in spite of herself—would threaten a severer penalty; then Lisl, the elder one, would be tried with some satirical question, but she was clever enough to turn the intended joke against the questioner, and cause a hearty laugh at his discomfiture. Now would come a sly innuendo about a lover, or a tale told me with the utmost gravity of how Nanny had promised she would marry him, and how he had refused—for which unparalleled effrontery he was of course duly made to suffer. But nothing could stop his good humour and his flow of spirits; on he went in the fullest joyousness, and seldom, I think, have heartier peals of merriment resounded in the cottage than on that pleasant evening.

Hardly was supper over when Berger took down a guitar which was hanging up in a corner, and playing upon it challenged the girls to accompany him in a song. At first they would not; but it was not likely he was to be disconcerted by a refusal, so he began alone, now some song about the chamois-hunter, now

a merry Schnadahüpfl*; and even in singing he contrived to have his joke, by the choice of a verse with some sly allusion, and by the look of intelligence he would then give this one or that as he rattled out his noisy rhymes. But all was taken in good part; he was an old friend of the house, and evidently a favourite.

One of the girls played the cithern, and the others accompanied her with their voices. Marie was also at length induced to sing, and with cast-down eyes, and as embarrassed at my presence as though a large audience were listening, warbled forth a charming little song, in which a Sennerinn reproaches her hunter-lover for his long absence from her hut. Everything this sweet young mountaineer did had a charm about it. I thought at the time, and think so still, that I had never seen such modest grace in any girl—she was so truly maidenly. In her presence you felt that there was a power which guarded her, protecting her even against evil thought, and which, following her steps, would shield her from any harm. And such a power *did* protect her,—it was her own pure womanhood.

To understand and feel all the beauty of these simple ditties, they must be heard under like circumstances: beneath a cottage roof, and sung by such a group as was here assembled round our little table. They belong to and form part of the mountains and mountain life, and nowhere else do they sound so beautiful; just as a common wild-flower shows most bright in its native lane or hedgerow.

* See a later Chapter.

Berger now jumped up, and pushing aside the table to make more room, was in an instant dancing first with one then with another of the sisters. It would have made the prettiest picture in the world, that dark wainscoted room, with its low ceiling also of dark wood, the girl playing the cithern and the other group dancing to its music, with the impenetrable, imperturbable, silent old aunt sitting quite in shade in the background, and calmly looking on. There is nothing more infectious than the dance; as soon as Berger stopped I took the other sister and danced with her; a matter requiring some little skill, so small was the space we had to perform in. When one pair stopped the other began; the walking and climbing of the day was forgotten, and we changed partners many a time that evening before we thought of going to our beds. However, as we were to be up early on the morrow, some hours' rest was not to be disregarded. My little bed-room was as comfortable as possible; everything was homely, but neat and deliciously clean.

In a preceding chapter I spoke of the high estimation in which the Solachers hold their calling; how they love it above every other, and look upon all other joys as tame and insignificant, when compared to those which their free mountain-life affords. Some such feeling Kobell has embodied in a little poem, of which

the following verses are a translation; and I give them here, because they seem to be not misplaced in a picture of mountain life.

The Chamois Hunter.

Where Edelweis* blooms on the bare rock's face,
Up there right well do I know each place;
Up there how gladsome is life, how free!
Methinks it could nowhere more joyous be.

No praters are there to watch and pry,
It's too far for them, 'tis up too high;
Up there you are with your God alone,
And mild and better your heart has grown.

And let them say whatever they will,
By night 't is there so solemn and still;
And when the peaks in the starlight gleam
To pray more readily then I seem.

A chamois-hunter you think is poor
And more forlorn than the veriest boor;
Yet it is not so; for look you, if 't were,
How sad his fate should his foot but err?

* *Edelweis—Gnaphalium Leontopodium*—a flower met with only on some of the highest mountains in certain parts of Tyrol and Bavaria. It is to be found in Berchtesgaden, and on the Scharfreuter in the Hinter Riss. It is much valued for the snowy purity of its colour, as well as on account of the difficulty of getting it. The very name, "Noble Purity," (*edel*, noble, *weiss*, white,) has a charm about it. Strangely enough it always grows in a spot to be reached only with the utmost peril. You will see a tuft of its beautifully white flowers overhanging a precipice, or waving on a perpendicular wall of rock, to be approached but by a ledge, where perhaps a chamois could hardly stand. But it is this very difficulty of acquisition which gives the flower so peculiar a value, and impels many a youth to brave the danger, that he may get a posy of Edelweis for the hat or the bosom of the girl he loves; and often has such a one fallen over the rocks just as he had reached it, and been found dead, in his hand the flower of such fatal beauty, which he still held firmly grasped.

The nearer Heaven, more sure you are
Your guardian angel cannot be far;
But down below in the crowd he might
Now always find you or see aright.

And mark! the Devil, who is no fool,
Prowls ever there when he wants a tool;
Where men together so thickly herd,
He has a handful without a word.

But here 't were not worth his while, and all
He'd get by coming would be a fall:
His God protects him, the hunter knows;
The Devil has none, so down he goes.

Ay, up on high do I love to be,
Where bounds the chamois so wild and free;
Where the marmot whistles from 'neath the stone,
There love I to be with my God alone!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHAMOIS.

Having come thus far, it is time, I think, to give some account of the chamois itself. First of all be it known the chamois is no goat*, but belongs to the antelope genus†, of which it is the only specimen inhabiting Europe. It is larger and more strongly built than a roebuck, and is much heavier. A good buck will weigh 55lb., and one above 60lb. is a particularly fine fellow. My friend Count Arco has however shot some that weighed 74lb. and 82lb. But such are rare and difficult to get at; for these old bucks remain alone in their inaccessible fastnesses and the most secluded places; and it is only when the winter has set in, and

* "Well, Peter, I do not think that the sport was so bad after all; for I believe that the chamois, in chase of which the Swiss risk their lives, and are out for days together on mountains of eternal ice and snow, is little better than a great goat after all."

"I didna hear of sic a beast mysel; but I ken, by yer honour's account, he is no worth the speering at."—*The Art of Deer Stalking, by W. Scrope, Esq.*, chap. vii.

† *Antilope rupicapra.*

the rutting season begun, that there is any chance of seeing them. In order to do so the hunter must brave the intense cold as well as all the dangers of a region of snow and ice, for he will be led to spots where good nerves are required not to feel overcome with horror at the scene around.

The hair of the chamois changes in colour at various seasons of the year, as is the case with the roe, and red and fallow deer. In summer their coat is of a red yellowish brown; in autumn it grows much darker, and in winter is quite black. But though the changes here indicated may be looked upon as the general rule, there will often be found in the same herd one or more differing strikingly from the rest, of a buff-colour perhaps, while all the others are of a reddish brown. The hair of the forehead, around the nose, the lower jaw, and the inside of the ears, is of a yellowish tinge, and remains throughout the year the same. The belly, the inside of the legs, and the shaggy hair that overhangs the hoofs, are also of this colour, and never change; the black stripe too, on both sides of the head, extending from the eye to the corners of the mouth, remains a striking feature under every circumstance.

The outer hair is long and coarse; that on the ridge of the back is of greater length than on any other part of the body, especially in winter, and of this the ornament called "Gems-bart" is made. Each hair is tipped with white; so that when a number of exactly the same length are bound together and spread out

like a fan, a white line is seen to border the black surface, and presents a pretty appearance. The longer the hair the more it is esteemed for this purpose.

The eye of the animal is large, dark, and intelligent; it is full of animation,—but this, in its expression of keen watchfulness, is the animation of fear. It carries its head erect, and its graceful ears pointed, as if prepared against surprise.

The horns, which are black, rise from the head just above and between the eyes; they are round and rougher at the base, but incline somewhat to flatness towards the top, which is smooth and polished. They do not stand up perpendicularly, but slant forwards at a right angle with the forehead; their points, which are very sharp, being bent back and downwards. This feature is not peculiar to the buck alone; there is however considerable difference between the horns of the male and female, which often assists the sportsman in distinguishing the two. The horns of the male chamois are thicker and altogether stronger-looking than those of the female; and instead of diverging from each other in so straight a line as hers generally do, their outline describes a slight curve as they rise upwards and apart from each other. But a still more striking characteristic of the buck is, that the points of his horns are bent much more inwards than those of the doe; hers form a semicircular curvature towards the back, while his, turning over abruptly, form rather a hook. This gives the head quite another expression; it has something more resolute

about it, as well as a dashing air and a look of bravado. The horns of a very good buck will be seven inches high, but I have seen some that much exceeded this measurement*. Although, when near, all these peculiar differences in the horns of the buck and doe are easily discernible, at a distance the distinction of course is not so striking, and the male is then recognized by his stronger build, by his general appearance and more gallant bearing. It is the same thing as with the stag, which, as he passes through a wood, though you should not see his antlers, you recognize instantly. How different his carriage from that of the hind, and particularly the way in which he bears his head! But it requires a very practised eye to distinguish thus with chamois, and it has often astonished me to witness how quickly and with what certainty the foresters have decided, almost at a glance, whether a buck were among a herd.

The head of the chamois is admirably constructed for uniting strength with the greatest possible lightness. The frontal bones are extremely thin,—so much so indeed that they would of themselves be liable to

* The finest I ever saw are in the collection of Count Arco of Munich, and are 9½ inches high. The buck to which they belonged was shot by poachers at Berchtesgaden a few years ago. This collection of the Count consists of antlers of the red-deer and the roebuck, with a fair number of the horns of the chamois, and is perhaps the finest in the world. Never before were antlers of such magnificent size and such strange formation collected together; and the room in which they are placed, built expressly for the purpose, and the tasteful arrangement of the whole, contribute greatly to the beauty of this superb collection. £30,000 has been offered for it, and refused.

fracture on the slightest casualty. But to make them strong, and at the same time retain their lightness, a second set is thrown over the first, and the space between is divided into cells, formed by the arched girders of solid bone which uphold the roof and bind the whole together. The system which Nature has here adopted is exemplified in the cells in the upper and lower part of the tube that forms the Britannia Bridge. Just as these thin iron plates would separately be unable to bear much, but placed above and united to each other present an amount of strength and firmness capable of resisting almost any opposing force, so these fine thin bones of the chamois' head, thus beautifully united by an arched cellular construction, become as firm as the rock on which the creature stands, and are at the same time so light as not to hinder any of its agile movements. The arched girders which occupy the space between the upper and lower surface rise, bridge-like, with a spiral twist, and here and there a flying buttress will give additional strength to the walls, or a lateral arch help to support the vault above.

The horn of the chamois is hollow up to a certain height; thence to the point it is a solid mass. This hollow part of the horn however is fixed on, and filled out with, a bony substance which grows with and forms part of the skull itself. By a forcible twist the two may be separated. When fighting the animal lowers his horns under the throat of his opponent, or turns his head sideways, that the sharp points may

come against his shoulder, and then drawing them back he endeavours in this way to inflict a wound. Among the many stories related of the chamois, it was said that they made use of their crooked horns to let themselves down by, in places where descent by other means was impossible. Ridiculous as the tale is, many believed it; but of such hereafter.

The food of these animals consists of the herbs found on the mountains, and the buds and young sprouts of the alpine rose and the latschen. This is their sole sustenance; no creature therefore is more innoxious than the chamois, and the wholesale destruction of them which has taken place since 1848 cannot even be excused on the plea that, like the red-deer, they occasionally tread down and injure the crops of the husbandman. They keep to their rocks, delighting in the highest and most inaccessible places; and it is only when winter sets in with all its rigour, that they descend to seek shelter and food in the woods somewhat lower down the mountain. At this season they feed on such grass and leaves as they can find, and probably also on the Iceland moss, which is met with on the mountains. In their stomach a hard dark-coloured ball is often found, bitter to the taste, but of an agreeable smell: this is called Bezoar, and owes its formation to the fibrous, resinous nature of the substances on which the chamois feeds.

The rutting season begins in November. At this period a sort of bladder forms beneath the skin at the root of the buck's horns, the lymph within which

has so strong a musk-like smell, that if the animal be shot at this time the odour will remain for years. Now too the stronger bucks make their appearance, and desperate battles take place. You may be startled also by an occasional bleat, uttered with angry impatience in the fervour of desire. If able to imitate the call, you will soon see a black form leaping along through the latschen or over the rocks, and coming towards the spot whence the sound proceeded. The period of gestation in the doe is twenty weeks. In May her young kid may be seen beside her, playing in the prettiest manner, leaping into the sunny air and rolling on its back upon the soft herbage. With a bound it will turn heels over head; not however forwards or backwards, but sideways; a proof of the wonderful strength and elasticity of its limbs even at this young stage of its existence.

There is something very amusing in the wiseacre look of such a little kid. Its bright eye twinkles like a star; its silly little face is full of drollery; and, pricking up its pretty velvet ears, it will turn its head most knowingly on one side, and seem to cogitate on the meaning of a flitting shadow: and then, not from any fear, but out of mere fun, will start away as though the shadow were its playfellow and were running after it in sport.

A doe has generally but one kid at a time; that she should have two is however by no means of unfrequent occurrence. The little creature at its birth is of a dark brownish-yellow colour.

There is perhaps no animal so peaceful and at the same time so timid as the chamois. Nature therefore, besides endowing it with a facility of climbing into the most inaccessible places, and thus avoiding pursuit, has enabled it to guard against the approach of danger by the great acuteness of its senses of sight, smell, and hearing. It is this which makes it so very difficult to get near them. A rolling stone or a spoken word at once attracts their attention; and they will look and listen to discover whence the sound has come that breaks the silence of their mountain solitude. For an incredibly long time they will then stand gazing fixedly in one direction, quite immoveable; and if it happen to be towards something in your neighbourhood that their attention has been attracted, you must lie still and close indeed to escape their observation. The eyes of the whole herd will be fixed on the spot in a long steady stare; and as you anxiously watch them from afar they almost look like fragments of rock, so motionless are they while they gaze. You begin to hope they have found no cause for alarm, when "Phew!" the sharp whistle tells they have fathomed the mystery, and away they move to the precipitous rocks overhead: unless panic-stricken, they stop from time to time to look behind; and then suddenly uttering the peculiar shrill sound, again move on.

It is true that on the mountains, where an awful silence ever broods, the slightest noise breaking the stillness is heard with wonderful distinctness a great way off; but even making allowance for this, there is

sufficient evidence that the senses of these animals are particularly acute. If but the gentlest wave be moving in the air, coming from you to them, they at once become aware of your presence, long before you perceive them or they see you.

In the human being this particular sense is, comparatively speaking, less developed than the others*. It is the one which man least needs, not wanting it for his safety, but possessing it solely to minister to his pleasures. When therefore we find it extremely acute in another animal, it strikes us more than any example of an unusually sharp sight or an extraordinary power of hearing; just as we are always more astonished at that in another which we are least able to achieve ourselves. A chamois, when dashing down the mountains, will suddenly stop as if struck by a thunderbolt, some yards from the spot where recent human footprints are to be found in the snow, and, turning scared away, rush off immediately in an opposite direction. The taint which the presence of the hunter has left behind is perceived by it long after he has passed.

The agility of the chamois has become almost proverbial; but to have any idea of what it is, one must be an eye-witness of the bounds they make, and see the places they will race down at full speed when

* This sense of smell is developed in a very high degree in the wild boar. I have often been surprised, when stealing upon one in the woods, to observe how soon he has become aware of my neighbourhood. Lifting his head, he would sniff the air inquiringly, then, uttering a short grunt, make off as fast as he could.

pursued. A smooth surface of rock, so smooth that a footing there seems impossible, and of nearly perpendicular steepness, is no obstacle to their flight. Down they go, now bounding, now gliding, with a velocity which seems to ensure their being inevitably dashed to pieces.

The chief strength of the animal is in its hind legs, which, if extended, would be longer than the others. On this account it springs upwards with more ease than it descends the mountain, and on level ground its walk is clumsy and ungraceful. It is not made to run, but bounds along over the ground. The hoof is cloven, long and pointed, and the slot of the chamois resembles that of a sheep. The edges are sharp, which causes it to slip easily on the ice, and on this account it rather avoids passing the glaciers. When standing, the hind legs are always bent, as if the animal were preparing to lie down, which no doubt helps considerably to break the fall when leaping from a great height. Notwithstanding this, the croup is still somewhat higher than the fore part of the body. The elastic force which the hind legs possess is immense. With a sudden bound the chamois will leap up against the face of a perpendicular rock, and merely touching it with its hoofs, rebound again in an opposite direction to some higher crag, and thus escape from a spot where, without wings, egress seemed impossible. When reaching upwards on its hind legs, the fore hoofs resting on some higher spot, it is able to stretch to a considerable distance, and

with a quick spring will bring up its hind quarters to a level with the rest of the body, and, with all four hoofs close together, stand poised on a point of rock not broader than your hand. On narrow overhanging ledges some thousand feet high they walk and gaze about, enjoying the security from pursuit which such spots afford.

But astonishing as their dexterity really is, much has been related of them that has no foundation in fact, any more than the tale of their placing sentinels to announce when danger is near. Indeed there is something very strange in the imperfect information obtained about the chamois, and the marvellous stories related of it, and of those who went in its pursuit. That this should have been the case for a time is very natural, especially in places remote from where the chamois was to be found. I conceive too that even later, and where men dwelt who followed the chase, there still hung about the chamois-hunter's life somewhat of mystery. We can well imagine that he was looked upon as one familiar with places where ordinary men would fear to venture,—accustomed to have Death stalking beside him as a companion, and to meet him face to face. His departure for the mountain—an unknown region hidden in cloud, and mist, and mystery,—his absence for whole days together, his startling accounts of the wildness, the silence and the solitude, and then occasionally the going forth of one alone who never returned,—all this gave a dim and dread uncertainty to the pursuit; and where un-

certainty is, imagination will be busy at her work. His very countenance—his widely-opened eye, always on the watch—even this must have awakened strange surmises of sights more fearful than he had yet hinted of.

But that much ignorance on the subject should have continued to the present day is still more remarkable, since the home of the chamois—Bavaria, the Tyrol, Switzerland, Styria—are not remote lands, but lie in the very heart of Europe. Had it been otherwise, this haze and indistinctness might have been accounted for by distance, which effaces outlines, and invests objects with tints, and shapes, and proportions that are not their own.

One author of recent date acknowledges that little is known of the habits of these animals, and accounts for it by the circumstance of "the chamois-hunter being generally a rude, uncultivated being; and that, as to naturalists, they have seldom had an opportunity of observing this animal in its solitary and dangerous haunts." The writer of this 'New and Perfect Art of Venery' repeats also an account to be found in many earlier works, which as a curiosity is worth extracting:—"One really great peculiarity is the way in which the chamois cross the fields of snow without sinking in. On account of their narrow and sharply-pointed hoofs they would naturally fall through, and the snow would be unable to carry them. They therefore hasten their flight in the following cunning manner. The last chamois jumps on the back of the one

before him, passes in this way over the backs of all the others, and then places himself at their head; the last but one does the same, and the others follow in order; and in this manner they have soon passed over such a field of snow." The same writer tells us also that "it is their inner heat which impels them to seek those places where snow is to be found."

A most curious opinion seems to have been prevalent—for I find the same thing related in old books of natural history, as well as in the recent publication from which the above extracts are taken—with regard to the chamois, when hard pressed and unable to escape its pursuers. I give the whole passage:—"The most dangerous chase of all is that of the chamois. The hunter must manage all alone, as neither man nor dog can be of any service to him. His accoutrements consist of an old coat, a bag with dry bread, cheese, and meat, a gun, his hunting-knife, and a pair of irons for the feet. He then drives the chamois from one crag to the other, making them always mount higher, climbs after them, and shoots them if he can, or if he finds it necessary; but if that should not be the case, and he has driven one so far that it is no longer able to elude him, he approaches quite close, puts his hunting-knife to its side, *which the chamois of its own accord pushes into its body*, and then falls down headlong from the rock."

In another work published at Frankfort-on-the-Maine in the year 1661, it is also said:—"At last, when the chamois can go no further, and the hunter

is about to throw or thrust it down from the precipice, if he draweth his knife and will thrust the same into it, *the chamois pusheth its own body with force upon the knife;* whereupon it is caught, and falleth downwards from a great height. The skin remaineth generally quite unbroken*." The same old writer tells us:—"Some hunters do drink the blood and the fat, that they may thereby obtain a steady head and freedom from giddiness when they come to steep places, and when they must hold on very firmly."

It is not at all unlikely that these properties were attributed to the animal's blood; for the hunter, like all men who live much with Nature, and make companionship with her various aspects, is by no means free from superstition. At the present day even the peasantry of Bavaria consider a certain part of the stag, when dried and powdered, a potent remedy in diseases of the bladder; and the resinous-looking drops which are found in the corners of the hart's eyes, called by some the "tears" of the stag, are looked upon by many as a sure specific in various disorders.

Strange are the shifts to which it is said the chamois-hunter is sometimes put, when, like the animal

* This is true. Though the body be never so bruised, the skin always remains whole. It is also a peculiarity of the skin of a chamois that it is of the same thickness throughout. By this you may always distinguish it from other skins, which are much thinner in some places than in others. Dealers who wish to palm off doe for chamois leather assist the deception by cutting a slit in some part and sewing the hole up again, such being always found in real chamois-skins where the ball has passed. If however you *feel* the skins carefully, you can hardly be deceived.

he is in pursuit of, "he can go no further." The author of the 'New and Perfect Art of Venery,' who has given so amusing an account of how the chamois play at leap-frog over the snow, says that in such cases, "when the hunter can get neither forwards nor backwards, and is unable to save himself by a leap, nought is left him but to fling off everything, and wounding the soles of his feet cause the blood to flow, so that by its stickiness he may be enabled to hold himself better on the slippery rocks."

In the ardour of pursuit, indeed, one might easily get into a place whence, unassisted, it would be quite impossible ever to get out. A spot may often be seen below which can be reached by a jump or by sliding downwards; but the question is, whether, when once there, it will be possible to get further or back again; for though you may let yourself *down* the smooth rock, there is no climbing *up* its steep surface. It is therefore necessary to be assured of this before taking such a leap, or you may find yourself, like the Emperor Maximilian, on a narrow ledge of rock, at your back the smooth stone, and before and below you nothing but the yielding air.

Note.

I SUBJOIN a few points of difference between the Goat and the Chamois. Their skeletons, it seems, are not the same; for not having myself examined the arrangement of the bones in the two animals, I quote, regarding their formation, from 'Histoire Naturelle, générale et particulière, avec la Description du Cabinet du Roi. Tome douzième. Paris, MDCCLXIV.' "L'apophyse épineuse de la seconde vertèbre cervicale diffère de celle du bouc, en ce qu'elle est moins haute et presqu'aussi saillante en arrière qu'en avant, ce qui ne se trouve ni dans la gazelle, ni dans le cerf, le chevreuil, etc.; la branche inférieure de l'apophyse oblique de la sixième vertèbre n'est pas échancrée comme dans le bouc: elle ressemble à celle de la gazelle, du chevreuil, etc." The frontal bone of the chamois, just before the horns, is concave; that of the goat, convex. The horns of the latter recede; those of the former animal always advance. The goat's horns too are flat near their base, and wrinkled; the chamois' are round, and not indented. The goat has frequently a beard, a chamois never; nor does it emit any disagreeable odour except during the rutting season, whilst the effluvium of the goat is always insupportable. The nose of the chamois is not drawn back like the goat; consequently the upper lip projects less beyond the nostrils. Its upper teeth advance slightly over the lower; in the goat they rest exactly on each other. In the chamois there is less depth from the top of the head to the lower jaw than in the goat, which gives the head more lightness and greater elegance of form. But the most decisive proof of the non-affinity of the two animals is that they *never* generate together. Although in the mountains herds of goats are constantly wandering about near the haunts of the chamois, no one instance is known of a she-goat having brought forth young which were a cross between the two breeds. The chamois indeed always avoid the places where goats have strayed. They dislike all intrusion on their solitude. The Steinbock (*Capra Ibex*) on the contrary, classed by naturalists among the goat genus, cohabits occasionally with the tame animal; and offspring presenting the peculiar features of such mixed race have been seen not unfrequently in Switzerland. The author cited above says that chamois, when taken young and brought up with the domestic goat, "*vraisemblablement* s'accouplent

et produisent ensemble." In this he is mistaken. He adds however that he never heard of any example of the kind. "J'avoue cependant que ce fait, le plus important de tous, *et qui seul déciderait la question* (of homogeneousness of race), *ne nous est pas connu;* nous n'avons pu savoir, ni par nous, ni par les autres, si les chamois produisent avec nos chèvres; seulement nous le soupçonnons."

It is quite evident then that chamois are not merely *ferœ capræ*. It was an *originally* wild animal, and not one become so by having wandered away into the wilderness. Animals wild by nature always retain somewhat of that original state, if taken even at their birth and attempted to be tamed. Goats, though quite at liberty, still like the society of man, and will come skipping to the spot where he is; indeed from the earliest times the goat is always mentioned as a *household* animal. The chamois, on the contrary, will flee at the very approach of a human being; and its terror and natural timidity can never be overcome, even though you may have reared it as a kid, and it has lived among men for years.

CHAPTER IX.

KREUTH.

On coming down next morning I found coffee awaiting me, which Nanny had made in order that I might have a warm breakfast before starting. We took the same road as the preceding day, till near the summit of the mountain; we then directed our steps at once to the ridge, whence a view could be obtained far down its sides and into the deep bottom. Here we waited a long time, in hopes that some chamois would be on the move, but in vain. One of the delights attending the pursuit of game in the highlands is, that, even should the pleasure of a successful day's sport be wanting, the grandeur of the scenery amidst which you move is in some sort a recompense for the labour endured. It is ever varying; and should the cloud-drift or the sun-rays not produce their endless changes, you are sure that in going a hundred steps further some new feature will present itself, or that you will see the same under a totally different

aspect. Our view here extended over fields of snow, stretching along the horizon into endless distance—one vast range of desert and of frost.

As nothing was to be seen we descended, intending to go toward the Kaiser Klause, where we confidently expected to find game. Passing at the foot of the rocks where the day before my chamois had dropped, Berger went to fetch his knife, which he had forgotten, while I kept on to the left. Here the whole declivity, which was long and steep, was covered with large blocks of stone, lying in all positions, some firmly wedged, and others so loose that without the greatest care your foot slipped down between them;—nothing more easy than to break an ankle in such a place! After crossing this sea of stone for nearly three-quarters of an hour, fog and mist came drifting towards me, followed by a thick rain, while the wind increased at every moment; and by the time I was nearly at the end of my stony passage, it came blowing furiously over the ridge in front. The rain too now poured down in torrents, the wind was bitingly cold, and in a few minutes I was wet to the skin. With such weather all stalking was at an end; so I began to look about for Berger, whom I last saw far off combating with the blast and with the difficulties of his position. I made a sign to return; and when we got lower down, the wind, coming up from the other side, rushed by over our heads without much inconveniencing us.

"I looked well at the place you fired from yester-

day," said Berger; "I am quite sure it was more than a hundred and thirty yards. When looking upwards from below, one sees how far it is."

By the time we got to the green hill-side where we first saw the chamois, the rain had ceased, the gloom had disappeared, and air and sky were bright again. Berger proposed that I should take my stand at a certain tree, while he would go down to the path, and entering the wood some distance off, pass through it in an oblique direction.

"Most likely it is not empty," said he; "and if chamois are there, they will come out near yonder trees, pass within shot of you, and then bear away in a curve for the higher ground*. Here you have chance enough, and if anything comes you will have a fair shot, though perchance a long one. However, any you may get here will be easy after that of yesterday."

I took up my position beside the withered trunk

* It may often seem unaccountable to one not a sportsman, how the movements of the game can be predicted with such certainty. It depends of course very much on the nature of the ground, as well as on the habits of the animal in question. Sometimes however, as in certain steep gullies, there is but one single path by which man or beast can get out of them; and if the hunter can reach that spot unobserved he is sure of a shot eventually; for as soon as the chamois are disturbed, by the rolling of a stone or any other means taken to make them move, on they come to the well-known path. Perhaps they may observe their danger: if they do, they will stand still and gaze before attempting the pass; and then, well aware that it is the sole place of egress, they will rush headlong forwards, braving in their extremity every danger. Chamois perceive in an instant the perils of their position when retreat is thus cut off, and their consternation is great and evident.

of a tree, anxiously listening for any sound. At last there was a rustling, and Berger emerged from the wood: he had seen nothing. It was too late in the day to think of trying elsewhere; we therefore at once set off homewards. When we had proceeded some way down the mountain, a bounding was heard among the underwood, as of an animal in flight. We listened: there were two. Berger ran forward, and saw a couple of chamois making for the rocky pastures on the other side of the Miesing, just below its summit, and where no one could follow.

"There the wall of rock is perpendicular," Berger observed: "that is their usual retreat when pursued. It would be useless to follow them, for they pass along the narrow ledges, and wait in places where there is no approaching them."

"But how low down they were! Who would have thought of meeting them here?"

"Ay, who indeed?" answered Berger. "I came nearly as far as this when I went through the bushes; I thought it was far enough. Had I but gone a little further, they would both have gone upwards, and have come out, as I said, where you were standing. You might then have brought down both."

"If we had gone toward the Klause today, do you think we should have seen anything?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, "for some capital places are there. If we had seen no chamois we might still have met with deer. The number of stags there formerly was astonishing. Even now, after so many have been

killed, fifty were shot quite lately. The order was given to destroy them, so the under-gamekeepers shot all they could find."

"But what a pity to exterminate them in that way!"

"Pity indeed, for they do no harm to anybody,—there is nothing for them to destroy. But you see it is close to the frontier, and poaching now is carried on so audaciously that we have no alternative but to shoot everything."

"Had you ever an adventure with any of the poachers there?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," said he; "and once in particular I acted foolishly enough: I went to a hut, and finding the door fastened on the inside, suspected there were some fellows inside. Foolhardy as I was, I went to the back window and tried to get in there. I had got my shoulders through, when what should I see through the door that divided the hut but a band of poachers who had taken shelter there? Back I squeezed myself quick enough, you may be sure. The fellows saw me too, but I was off and behind a tree just in time."

"Did they not follow you?"

"Not they; some came as far as the door, but when they found I was not to be seen they did not trust themselves any further; for had I liked, the first that came out might have had a ball sent through him; and that they knew."

"And how did you get off?"

"Oh, easily enough: I went from one tree to another, and when I was out of shot walked away at my leisure."

We now went to the cottage of the Solachers to fetch the chamois, and without delay set off for Fischbachau, which we reached before dusk.

On the morrow I bade my friends farewell, and set off betimes for Egern. In the afternoon I left for Kreuth, and went at once to the forester.

If ever a man had an honest open countenance it was this one. His bared throat was, like his face, ruddy from exposure to wind and weather. I felt sure of a good reception as soon as I looked at him, and presented my letter with confidence. He promised to do what he could; but then came the old tale of the scarcity of game, and the many difficulties attendant on granting the permission required. He told me that the following day nothing could be done, for none of the assistant foresters were at home: they were out on the mountains, and it was uncertain what day they would return.

The next morning on rising I found it was raining, and this continued the whole day. In the evening the young foresters returned, and as Max Solacher sat over his tankard of beer in the parlour of the inn, I made his acquaintance. He has a name for being an excellent sportsman, and is considered one of the best climbers in the mountains. I found him below the middle height,—a great advantage in certain difficult places; but his limbs were firmly knit,

and it was always a pleasure to look at his sinewy legs as he stepped lightly along up the mountain before me. A chamois-hunter has never any superabundant flesh; he is spare of habit, and I have remarked, or perhaps only fancied I did so, that in his eye is something peculiar, common to all of his class. It has seemed to me that, animated as it is when on the mountain or under the influence of surprise or excitement, at other times when meeting him by chance in common daily intercourse its expression is wanting, as though the feelings that gave it life were slumbering. If there be anything in this beyond mere fancy, I can well account for the circumstance. A chamois-hunter on the plain is like a sailor on shore,—he is surrounded by uncongenial objects, and these and the incidents that exist and take place about him are to him matters of little interest: they in no wise awaken his sympathy. As the seaman is ill at ease on land and wants to be afloat again, so the hunter is impatient to get back to his mountains. There he is at home,—in all that surrounds him he feels an interest. But the flat land and its occupations are to him tame and tedious; and so he saunters along, and the sparkle of his eye is dimmed by listlessness. Let however but a sound be heard which calls his attention, and at once the eye is dilated; it is wide open and prominent, the lids drawn far back, and the pupil is seen in a large surrounding space of white. The habit of attentive watching, of ever-constant vigilance, the frequent pre-

sence of danger and the narrow escapes from risk—all these cause the eye to acquire a certain fixedness of look, as if it were guarding against surprise. That this is not mere fancy on my part is proved by a circumstance which occurred to me while writing this. After having spent some weeks in the mountains I returned direct to Munich, and the very first observation a friend made on meeting me again was, that my eyes had a different expression: "You have got," he said, "a *chamois-hunter's eyes.*" He had not, probably, remarked the peculiarity in this class of men as I had done; but he saw something strange in my looks, and knowing where I had been, at once attributed the appearance which so struck him to my recent pursuits*.

I remember too, when once at the Königs See, and while at the house of the forester waiting till the rain ceased, an under-gamekeeper came into the room. He had been out three days on the mountains and had just returned. The man's look would have struck any one. At that time all relating to mountain life was strange to me, and the whole appearance of the new comer excited my curiosity. He was tall, gaunt, and bony; his brown and sinewy knees were bare,

* Not a week after penning these lines, I happened to be looking through a volume of Hazlitt, and found the following remarks, which at once reminded me of my own observations on the look of the chamois-hunter. I was very pleased to find them, as they confirmed what I had said. He is speaking of Raphael: "His figures have always an in-door look . . . . and want *that wild uncertainty of expression which is connected with the accidents of nature and the changes of the elements.*"—*The Round Table: On Gusto.*

and scratched and scarred; his beard was black and long, his hair shaggy, and hunger was in his face; the whole man looked as if he had just escaped from the den of a wolf, where he had been starved and in daily expectation of being eaten. But it was his eyes—it was the wild staring fixedness of his eyes—that kept mine gazing on him. The bent eagle-nose, the high, fleshless cheek-bones, added to their power. There was no fierceness in them, nor were they greedy eyes; but they were those of a man who had been snatched from a horrible death, in whom the recollection was not yet effaced nor was ever likely to be. They were always wide open: the whole creature seemed vigilant, and awaiting at every moment to have to wrestle with fate. But this was observable in the eyes alone, not in the other features; for the nostril was not distended nor the lips clenched, as they must have been to harmonize with the meaning that was in his eyes. I thought I had seen the man before: when it suddenly occurred to me that it was the head of the "Ugolino*" I was staring at.

I entered into conversation with him, and he told me that not long ago he had slipped on the ice and slidden down a long way without being able to stop himself. He was in expectation every moment of going to the bottom of the abyss, where, even had he not been dashed to pieces, he could never have got out again, when his foot was caught and he went no further. His pole and rifle flew down into the gulf.

* The Ugolino of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

To go after them was impossible; for fields of ice were there, with large clefts in them, and into one of these frightful crevices both had doubtless fallen.

Had he told me that, Prometheus-like, he had been chained to a glacier for a whole winter amid the icy world of the mountain-top, exposed to the rains and tempests and the dreary darkness, I could almost have believed his words, so in unison were his features and his whole appearance with such a tale.

I was glad to find that I should be able to go out in company with Max Solacher, or Maxl as he was familiarly called; for many friends had told me that with him, being one of the best stalkers, there would be more chance of success than with any one else.

The next morning at five o'clock he came to the inn to fetch me, and we sallied forth at once into the grey dawn. After following the road for some distance we turned aside and entered the forest; and when the light of the morning had come over the hill-tops and penetrated into the hollows, and through the gloomy boughs, it showed that even already the characteristics of mountain scenery had begun. Beside the rugged path a wild torrent was tumbling over blocks of stone, that in some preceding spring had been loosened and washed down from the higher ground by the rush of a thousand streams. Some huge tree had been felled, and in the deep part thrown across it as a bridge, the branches hanging down in the water, and its trunk mercilessly split and hacked. It was a region of wood, where a whole tree would perhaps be taken to mend

the pathway, or mighty stems cut down and left to rot during succeeding winters. On the hill-side great pines were standing out against the sky, half-uprooted by the blast that had descended upon them suddenly from above; and others, scathed and shivered, were crushing with their weight a young forest that had sprung up beneath their shade. On looking upwards, on both sides and before you was dark solemn foliage, and afar off perhaps and high up a sharp line, beyond which was the welcome sky. We were indeed in the mountains.

Continually ascending, we went on till we came to a steep slope. Above us the trees were not so dense, and we were able to see far from the spot where we stood. We looked, and in silence. Presently, with his eyes still fixed on some object above him, Max pulled out his telescope and made a survey.

"There are chamois," he said. "I see *one*, but there are others, I know."

The chamois he now pointed out to me I had seen some minutes before; but as it was a great way off, and quite motionless, I had not recognized it. Indeed one is constantly deceived; for at a distance a chamois is but a small black spot, and stones and bushes often assume the appearance of the game; it is only when you examine them through your glass, that you see what they really are.

"But how are we to get at them?" observed my companion, looking round and examining the relative position of the chamois and ourselves. It really was

no easy matter. They were some two or three thousand yards from where we stood, and between us and them was a very deep and precipitous ravine; not rugged however, but covered with a few trees and a scanty herbage.

"We must go back again," said he, "get down the gully, and up the other side over the lahne. It is troublesome work, but there is no other way of getting at them. We must then stalk through the trees, and get as near them as possible." So looking well at the place where they stood and at the surrounding objects, we went down the gully, along some projecting rocks, and up the other side. Solacher constantly kept one point in his eye, in order not to lose the direction of the spot we were making for. At last he stopped to look about him, and to determine with exactitude where the game might be. Our plan was, to get round and above it; we had therefore to be cautious not to describe too small a circle in our approach. Max now advanced stealthily, while I remained behind; and "craning" over a bit of rock he espied them to the left.

"There they are!" he whispered; "they have winded us and are moving. Quick! A little more forward,—don't you see them? There, by the stump of a tree!"

I only saw one, and that was more than half hidden by the stems; but as there was no time to lose I fired.

"He 's down!" cried Solacher; and we ran forward

to get a second shot as the others should come into sight. But they were too quick. We went to the one I had shot, and found to my chagrin it was a kid. This was vexatious, but it was the only one I saw, and being partly hidden, I had not, in the shade of the wood, been able to distinguish it. While we were cleaning it, there was a croaking and a rustling of wings in the air.

"Ha! there are the ravens," said Solacher; "hardly has the rifle cracked, before those birds are on the spot. Where they come from I can't tell; for though not one was to be seen before, as soon as anything is shot they appear directly."

As my companion would have to carry the chamois the whole day, I believe he was not sorry it was only a kid; for to him this was nothing, and he felt the difference no more than if an additional bullet or two had been put into his rücksack.

We went up higher, and then kept along the side of the mountain; we presently crept forward, and looked over into an immense chasm. Solacher drew back with a start. "Chamois are there," he whispered; "but they have heard us. What a pity! They are off—they are moving," he said, again peeping over. "Ah, the devil take you and your whistling!" he continued angrily, as one of the herd uttered the shrill long-drawn-out sound that betokens fear. "But, quick! get a shot if you can."

It was a tremendously long shot at an animal so small as a chamois, and I said it was useless to fire.

"It 's two hundred yards," replied Solacher, "but there is nothing else to be done. We cannot get nearer to them: 'tis a chance if you hit; however you can but try."

I therefore sat down, and resting my elbow on my knee, prepared to fire.

"Tell me which one you aim at."

"The one to the left of the rock," I answered. "Now he 's moving,—that one," and my rifle thundered in the hollow as if the whole mountain was shaken down. "It 's missed, I know," I said at the same moment.

"It was a venture," he replied; "at that distance I too might have shot twenty times and missed. There they go,—but slowly," and the whole herd passed along the bottom of the stony hollow.

It was a wild place, that hollow! We stood on the brink of it; and before us, reaching up to the very sky-line, was the rent in the mountain that frost or water, or some other of the powerful agents by which Nature works her changes, had made in its steep side. It was like a stone-quarry, but of gigantic size,—wild, forlorn, and desolate.

"There they go, but slowly," said Solacher, watching the retreating herd. "Now they stop and graze. There 's one lying down,—the maledite brood!"

"Could we not get down to the right, and stalk up round the mountain, and so meet them?" I asked, not knowing the ground.

"Yes, we might, but the wind is now coming up-

wards, and they would be off: it is no good. If I had only seen them directly I looked over, we might have crept round and had a capital shot."

We sat down and watched them—the usual consolation on such occasions; and we pulled out and ate our crust. From here we saw the massy Plau Berg, slightly covered with snow. It is the first considerable mountain between Tegernsee and the Tyrol, and rises like a strong rampart above the narrow valley of Kreuth.

We now went downwards, and across a lawn-like meadow, on which stood a hut. We espied two chamois; but what was to be done? the wind was so favourable there was hardly any chance of being able to approach within shot. We determined therefore that it would be best to try and drive them; so taking up my position on the right, while Max Solacher went through the wood, I awaited the result. But we were unsuccessful; instead of going along the declivity, they moved away over the brow of the hill. In a glade lower down we soon after tracked a good stag; "And he has been here lately too," said my companion, distending his nostrils and sniffing the tainted air.

As we were going homewards we discovered among the trees a man with a rifle at his back. On approaching nearer we found it was old Solacher, the uncle of Max and brother of the old aunt at Baierisch Zell.

"He is seventy-two years old," my companion told

me; "and he will still go up any mountain. *He has no breath at all!*" by which he meant to say that he never was out of breath, let the ascent he had to mount be long as it might. It was he who had once had an affair with a bear. When it was known that the animal was in the mountains, a general turn-out took place and the pursuit began. Old Solacher—young then however—contrived to wound him, but the bear did not drop, and though he followed the red track for hours he was unable to come up with him again. He got away then, but was shot four years after in the Tyrol.

The next morning I was up betimes; but on looking out of the window and finding the mountains covered with mist, I turned in again. It afterwards cleared up, and Max proposed we should set off in the afternoon for a hut, where we could sleep, and go out the first thing in the morning. "We shall then be close at hand," he observed, "and can have a splendid stalk. Where I intend to go is the best place we have, and after the two drives reserved for the King it is the one I like most. We must take something with us, to cook our *schmarren*—some meal and butter, and some bread. We shall be warm enough in the hay."

"Well, when shall we start?"

"Why, it is dark now by five o'clock, so it will be better to leave at one." And having got our things together, off we set, in good spirits and buoyant with expectation.

CHAPTER X.

THE ALM HÜTTE.

At one o'clock we set off. The snow was gradually disappearing from the summit and sides of the Plau Berg, and in place of the smooth, unbroken, equal surface, the rugged dark rock showed itself in patches through the glittering covering.

"It must be warmer up yonder than it is here," observed Solacher. "The snow is creeping slowly away and will soon all be gone."

"Is there any stalking to be had there now?" I asked.

"No, it is a hundred chances to one that we should find anything. You see, being just on the frontier, the Tyrolians come over the mountains; and formerly even they were constantly trying what they could get. However, on such a mountain as that the chamois will hardly be exterminated. They have so many places where they can maintain themselves against pursuit; and be sure, long after every chamois

is destroyed in the neighbourhood, on the Plau Berg they will still be found."

"Are any ugly places there?" I asked.

"Yes, some are ugly enough. But it is not absolutely necessary to go where they are, with the exception of one, and that cannot well be avoided. You have to step along a very steep and narrow ledge; and then a place is to be crossed,—you have to spring across it,—which, if not sure-footed and free from giddiness, one could hardly manage, for below it goes down a tremendous depth. That is the only place you are absolutely obliged to pass, and there you *must* go, for by no other way is it possible to get out."

"There is a ridge too, is there not, which is very narrow, with a precipice on each side?"

"Yes, but that is not much: it is narrow, but if you are only steady you may walk across it easily."

"Not so easily though," I said: "a friend of mine walked along it, but after a few steps he was obliged to sit down, and with his legs dangling on each side to cross it astride. Did you ever meet any poachers on the Plau Berg, Maxl?" I asked.

"Yes," said he; "I and two assistant-foresters were on the mountains, and we saw seven men, Tyrolians, all armed and looking for chamois. We called to them, and off they ran. One of them however I overtook; I kept his gun, hat, and powder-horn, and then let him go."

"But as there were seven of them, I wonder they made off."

"Oh," said he, laughing, "the Tyrolians are afraid of the Bavarian balls: they never hold out, but directly they espy one of us they take to their heels. Some years since a Tyrolian was missed: he had come over, it seems, and had been on the Plau Berg, but he never returned. His friends came and searched for him, and made every possible inquiry, but all in vain; he was never heard of again. Well, since then the Tyrolians have grown shy: they think perhaps that if they come, they too may not find their way home again."

The manner in which my friend Maxl told this story, made me strongly suspect he knew very well why the Tyrolian never went home again. Of course he vowed that he knew nothing of the matter, and it certainly is possible he did not; but there was an archness and a gusto in the way he spoke of it, that made me feel sure of the contrary. As the man's friends never found him, there was certainly a possibility that he had fallen over a precipice, and that the body had rolled down into some deep impenetrable chasm. Such a mountain is of immense extent; the rents, and clefts, and hollows are innumerable, and if the body had by chance slipped under one of the thousand fragments of rock that are lying about, this circumstance alone might be enough to hide it from the eye of the most careful seeker. Long after, perhaps some chance passer-by might stumble over a few bleached bones, but no one would know whose they were or aught of the dead man's story.

The case of the Tyrolian on the Plau Berg is by no means a solitary one of the kind. Occasionally, too, the forester's wife will wait and watch in vain for her husband's return. It is not long since that the body of one of the assistant-foresters of Berchtesgaden was found upon the mountain: it had been drawn aside from the path and flung among the latschen, which accounted for its not being found until several months after he had been shot. The poacher was evidently hidden from view, and had allowed him to come along the path within a yard or two of the muzzle of his rifle; for the dead man's clothes were still black and singed where the ball had entered. It had passed through the middle of his chest.

In about two hours we arrived at the hut. It stood on a pleasant pasturage, and facing it rose the mountains partly covered with forest, while on one side a high rock jutted abruptly up into the sky. Behind was a gentle wooded slope; thither we now went, and looked toward the mountain opposite us. We examined every part with the naked eye and with our glasses, but not a creature was to be seen. We watched for more than an hour; and then turning toward the rock that rose above the valley presently saw a chamois grazing, now visible and now disappearing among the herbage. Shortly after we discovered another nearer the summit; and having watched them for a long time, as it was getting cold and dusk, we went toward our hut.

"We won't disturb them," said Maxl, "for today

we could do nothing, and they will be there tomorrow for certain: we shall then be able to get at them better, and may make sure of a shot."

The hut where we intended to take up our lodging for the night was, thus late in the season (October 15), of course deserted. The cows had gone down into the valley, and with them the blithe dairy-maids. But when they leave their summer abode the door is not locked; a latch only keeps it from being blown open by the wind; so that the hunter, should he be overtaken by night or by a storm, can enter there and find a comfortable shelter. We went up the steps, lifted the latch, and entered. Nothing could be neater than the room: it was as clean and nicely arranged as if prepared for a visitor. On one side was a raised hearth of stone, about two feet and a half from the ground: it was large, and necessarily so, for there in summer-time, in a huge copper vessel suspended over the fire by a sort of crane fixed in the wall, the preparations for cheese-making are carried on. The wall above the hearth was neatly white-washed, as well as the stones round the hearth itself. Above it was a pile of dry thin laths for lighting a fire, and in one corner a goodly stack of logs for fuel. On a shelf near were some lucifer-matches and a horn spoon; and there was a simple broom, fan-shaped and made of heather, left as a hint for the sojourner there, before he left, to make all as tidy as he had found it. Max went down a few steps in one corner of the room into the cellar, having first lighted one of the long pieces

of resinous wood to serve as a flambeau. Below were the utensils used by the little household during their residence on the mountain,—all bright and clean, and arranged in perfect order: large brown pans for the milk, and smaller ones too, ranged beside each other like the plates over a kitchen dresser; wooden bowls and pails, all of which had been well scoured before being stored away for the winter. We brought up such things as we wanted,—some pans to make our *schmarren,* and a pail to fetch fresh water in. Three other huts stood on the meadow beside the one in which we were, and a rivulet ran gurgling through the herbage and might be heard tumbling into a rude basin of stones on the other side of a green hillock. Thither Maxl now went to fill the water-pail. Had he been alone he would hardly have gone even thus far without taking his rifle. It is well to be prepared for every risk, and in such situations one can never be safe against a surprise. Should a poacher also come to the hut to pass the night, and the forester be at that moment gone to the spring for water to cook his supper, and his rifle left in the hut, not only would he lose it, but being unarmed he would be entirely at the other's mercy. As long as you have a rifle in your hand, and a tree or a stone to stand behind, the odds are as much in your favour as in that of your adversaries.

While my companion was gone to the spring, I stood at the door of the hut and looked out upon the scene before me. It was getting dark, and the out-

lines of the mountains opposite were already indistinct. A cold gust came up from the valley, and in a moment after huge ghost-like forms swept by, followed by others in long succession; grey trailing clouds passed solemnly on over the meadow, and in a few seconds the whole space between the mountains was filled with thick mist. It is astonishing how quickly the landscape is sometimes enveloped and shut out from view. The meadow was hidden from sight, as well as all else except the nearer hut, which loomed through the vapoury gloom.

We were both glad to be so comfortably housed, and bolting the door set about making a fire. It was pleasant and cheering within, as soon as the blaze lighted up the walls and roof, and the dry wood crackled and flung round its sparks upon the hearth. Stowed away in a secret place known only to himself, Solacher had a frying-pan of his own in this hut; for it seemed he often made it his temporary home, as well when the dairy-maids were gone into the vale as during their summer sojourn here. The frying-pan was fetched, and he at once set about the supper, each of us however having first taken a long draught at the freshly-filled water-pail.

The rücksacks were opened, and their contents brought forth. In Solacher's was the usual small bag of flour and the wooden box with butter, which the chamois-hunter always carries with him; and out of the midst of the flour two eggs came to light, which he had put in that safe place for me, in order that the

schmarren might be light and delicate. Being an epicure in his way, he had also taken care to have a few apples with him, to make his own mess the more savoury. I had some white bread, the remains of a dried sausage, and a small bottle of rum. We inspected our store, and I then blew the fire into a blaze, while Maxl prepared the usual dish of the hunter and mountaineer. It is made in this wise: some of the flour was turned out into an earthen pan; a certain quantity of water and the yolk of one egg was then added (the other being kept for tomorrow's breakfast); and the whole having been well stirred, water was poured in till it grew sufficiently thin. The frying-pan, containing great lumps of butter, was now put on the fire, and, when this boiled, the contents of the pan were emptied into it. The cake was allowed to get brown on one side, care being taken however that it did not burn; it was then turned, and with an iron instrument the whole was chopped up into pieces varying in size from a filbert to a small walnut. An apple was sliced in, some more butter added, all well stirred up together, and when every little piece was nicely brown it was turned out smoking into the pan ready to be eaten.

Sitting on the raised ledge, with our feet inside and towards the hearth, we ate our supper, and well pleased was Maxl at the praise I bestowed upon his cookery. The schmarren was really excellent: to make it well is said not to be so easy as it appears, and that without due attention the cake becomes heavy and

dough-like. A slice of bread and a good draught of water completed the repast. We had lighted one of the long dry resinous strips of wood, and stuck it into the wall to serve us as a lamp while supping; but now, while sitting over the embers, we from time to time flung a dry chip or two upon them, and the flickering flame they made threw around a sufficient light. The shutters of the windows were well closed and fastened on the inside,—a very necessary precaution, for should a poacher chance to approach a hut whence he saw a light gleaming through the crevices, it would be an easy matter for him, as the forester was sitting over his fire, to gratify revenge, and, stealing quietly to the window, send a bullet through his heart. It is one of the first things therefore on such occasions to see that all is safe*.

As I sat there enjoying to the full all the comfort of my situation, I could not but feel thankful to the dairy-maids who had left the hut in so neat a state, and enabled us so easily to satisfy our wants. I said as much to Maxl, but he did not seem to think it called for any praise. "A fine thing indeed," exclaimed he, "if the wenches were to go away and not leave all in order! I should like to catch them doing such a thing! A good rating they'd get for their

* Not long before I was at Fischbachau one of the keepers was sitting at table with his wife and her little baby in her arms, when a blunderbuss loaded with slugs was fired through the window into the room. The wall opposite still had the shot-marks scattered over it. Luckily no one was hurt. And this summer (1851) one of the foresters near Ratisbon had a gun fired into his room at night when his family were around him: this time too all escaped.

laziness. No, all must be cleaned up and put aside, that one may know where to find what is wanted; and wood brought in and stacked, so that a fire may be made directly. Suppose we had come here and found nothing—no dry wood, no pans or hay—we should not have spent a very comfortable evening, I think!"

I was amused at Maxl's looking on all this as a right, which the chamois-hunter, as lord of the creation, might duly claim. The fact is, the young foresters when out on the mountains in summer constantly repair to some particular hut for a warm meal or a night's shelter. They are welcome guests, for they bring with them mirth and news of the great world and of what is going on in the dale. And although perchance none of the lasses is the sweetheart of the youth who is the most frequent visitor at the hut, still the friendly intercourse of many a summer and an interchange of little acts of kindness will cause them to provide, with all a woman's thoughtfulness, for the poor fellow's comfort when he comes to spend a long solitary night there in autumn, and the hut is quite deserted; so before leaving the mountain pasturage they will set in order everything for the friend and favourite, who is sure to visit it often when they are gone.

There was a door in the room in which we were sitting that led immediately into the cow-house, and above it was the hay-loft. Over this door was written, "Catharina Hess." I asked Solacher if that was the name of the dairy-maid.

"Yes," he said, "that is her name. She is the prettiest girl on all the mountains round. Her sister Lisl is a nice girl too; such a pair you will not easily match."

"'T is a pity they are not here now," I observed.

"Ay, if they were, what fun we would have! They should sing and *jodeln*, and we would make the old hut ring with our merriment."

But as they were not there, to cheer us with the music of their laughter and their voices, we flung some more wood on the fire, and tried to make the place look bright with the ruddy blaze.

"If I had but something to boil water in, Solacher, we might have a glass of grog," said I; "and that would warm us well before going to bed."

"Grog—what is that? As to boiling some water, that is easy enough; we shall be sure to find something in the cellar." Taking a firebrand he went below and brought up a couple of pipkins, in one of which we set the water on the embers to boil; into the other I poured some rum, and having sugar with me we soon had a hot and fragrant beverage.

"What is it?" asked Maxl, as he sipped at the edge of the pipkin: "what capital stuff! Why, it 's like wine, but it is too strong." And though it was far from being anything like a nor'wester, I was obliged to add much water before it suited his palate —so unvitiated by strong drink was the taste of the hardy and frugal mountaineer.

We talked about Baierisch Zell, Max Solacher's

home; and he related to me how his father during the war had received a shot through the lungs, "close to the hill," said he, "which you passed in going there."

"But how did it happen?" I asked.

"Why, you see, he and seventy-five more went out against five hundred Tyrolians, who had come with carts to plunder the village. The men of Baierisch Zell of course took care to get behind the trees and rocks; and being good shots each one brought down his man. My father had already killed three, when he himself was hit—perhaps he had shot even more, but of those three he was certain."

"It was a pity he was wounded so soon, for, being so cool and a good shot, he would have knocked over a few more."

"I remember," he continued, "my father used in particular to tell us of one man, an immense fellow, who kept on loading and firing away like the devil. He was a good shot, and almost all his balls told. He was standing behind a pile of wood, quite protected. Well, my father marked him, and thought to himself, 'I'll soon stop you, my boy!' So he kept his eye on him and waited; and just as he leaned a little forward to fire again, my father was too quick for him; in the same second his rifle cracked, and the Tyrolian doubled up together, bent forward, and fell. They were obliged to retreat, and had to use the carts which they had brought to fetch plunder to carry off their own dead."

"And your father recovered?"

"Oh yes, he lived a long time after that, quite well and hearty."

"And how was it, Maxl, that your brother Henry got wounded in the foot so badly?"

"That the poachers did: those of Miesbach and Schlier See are the worst; they fire directly they see a forester, no matter whether he attacks them or not. It was near Schlier See that it happened. Henry came suddenly upon five or six poachers, and immediately called to them that he would stand aside and let them pass, without attempting to stop them or to fire. And so he did; but one of them, when he got near, fired and hit him in the ankle. He fell directly, and the poachers went on and left him there. With great difficulty he dragged himself to the nearest Senn Hütte, and the Sennerinnen bandaged his foot and he was carried home."

"And what about Kreuth, is there much poaching going on now?"

"It is not long ago that Ignace, the son of my old uncle, he whom we met yesterday as we were coming home, had an adventure with some of them. It was just on the hill where you shot the kid. He was going up the mountain and saw the footprints of several men in the snow. He wondered who could have been there, so he followed the track for some time, and presently observed a fellow with a rifle in his hand, waiting and watching for game. He drew nearer and looked well at him, but still without knowing him. At last he asked him what he was doing there, when up jumped

the man, crying out, 'You rascal of a forester, lay down your rifle, or I'll send a ball through your body.'"

"And did he?"

"Of course he did not," replied Max; "Ignace is a young fellow, only seventeen years old, but he sprang behind a tree and levelled his rifle. The man ran off, and Ignace vows that, if he had not, he would have shot him on the spot."

And now we talked of old times, when game was plentiful on the mountains, of the chamois that had been shot, and by whom and where, and of those matters which to some appear trifling, but which to the hunter are full of interest. We chatted on so long and earnestly that we let the fire get low, and our faces looked almost spectral as the glowing embers threw a faint light upon them. But we flung on more wood, and soon fanned the heap into a cheerful blaze.

"Let us boil another pipkin-full of water, Maxl," said I; "a little more of what you find so capital, and then to bed."

He had still many a question to ask, for I had told him about the herds of game in America, and it had set his imagination on fire. How much he would like to go there! but then the water! Water he did not like, and he asked how long, in crossing, he would have to be upon it.

"But what makes you dislike it?" I inquired.

"Once, you know, I was stationed at the Königs See, and in going over the lake in winter when

it was frozen I slipped through a hole. I came up under the ice; but by a wonderful chance, after going down a second time I rose at the hole again, and my comrade pulled me out. Since then I have quite a horror of the water. I should never have left the Königs See but for that: however as I had often to go on the lake I asked to be stationed elsewhere, for that dread of the water I never could overcome."

"You would of course rather be there than at Kreuth?" I asked.

"Certainly, much rather. There is no place like Berchtesgaden—what mountains and difficult places! And there too we used to have a right merry life, so many gentlemen came to shoot. Once," he continued laughing, "something curious happened to me, but though I was sadly disappointed at the time it amuses me now when I think of it."

"What was it, Maxl? let us hear the story."

"Well," said he, "a certain Baron von C * * * came from Munich for some shooting. I don't know who he was, but he was sent with a recommendation from some one at court to the head-forester. I was to go with him. The day before we went out, he told me that if he missed the first chamois he would give me a hundred florins!"

"If he hit it, you mean," said I, interrupting him.

"No, no, if he missed, he said, I was to have a hundred florins, and if he hit he would give me ten: I was astonished, and asked if he was in earnest. 'Oh

yes,' he answered, 'quite so: if I miss the first shot, a hundred florins are yours.' Well, I thought, it is strange enough,—but a hundred florins! that 's a sum worth having; and I began considering how I could manage to make him miss the first time he fired. All night I lay awake thinking the matter over, but I could not hit upon any plan whatever. Next day I was going up the mountain to show him his stand before the drive began, when down below us in a gully I saw some chamois. That 's just right, thought I; now then for the hundred florins. So I told him to wait there, while I went on to drive the chamois, to enable him to have a shot at them. When I got to the head of the ravine there lay a great piece of rock that I could hardly move; but by leaning my back against the block I at last succeeded, and over I sent it into the gully below. You may think what a noise it made! Down it dashed, tearing and crashing, and leaping from rock to rock, into the very midst of the chamois. They were frightened out of their senses, and off they went as fast as they could bound. This was just what I wanted, for I knew that my gentleman was so hot he would fire directly he saw them, whether far or near. And I was right; bang! went his rifle not a second after. Now, thought I, the hundred florins are safe; he has missed for certain. When I got back to him I asked if he had hit or missed. He had not missed, he thought. This however we would ascertain on coming back, for to stop then was not possible, as we should have reached the stand only

after the drive had begun. I was very pleased all the time, being sure he had not hit him. On our way down I went to look after the chamois; and sure enough, there he lay, quite dead. The Baron gave me the ten florins as he had promised, but the hundred which I had calculated on having I did not get."

Our cheerful fire, the warm beverage, and the merry stories we had to tell each other, made the long evening pass away quickly enough.

"It is a pity the maids have left no cheese here," said Max, who, like myself, was getting hungry again; "they would if I had told them. They would leave anything if they thought it would be of service—cheese, salt, in short whatever I choose to ask for."

There was something very pleasing in these little acts of kindness,—this thoughtfulness of another's wants, when there should be no one to minister to them but himself. But indeed there is much good-heartedness in these people; and I never left the mountains and my trusty friends the foresters, to move again among the conventional forms of town society, without a regret for their many gracious services, rendered always with the best of all politeness—that of a willing heart.

"Now, Maxl, it is time for bed; empty the pipkin, and then let us turn into the hay. But we will first see how the weather looks." And I opened the door of the hut. Without was darkness as profound as that which must have weighed upon the world when all was yet chaos: not a star was in the sky. I never

yet looked upon such darkness: before and around me was one mass of gloom. The gurgling of the rivulet was heard as it crossed the meadow; a low moaning wind moved among the rocks. I shut the door quickly, and Maxl, as my chamberlain, kindling a piece of pine, prepared to light me to bed. Having bolted the door, my companion gave me my rifle. "It is better to take it with you," said he; "one can't tell what may happen; and at all events it is safer than to leave it down here." I scrambled into the loft, whilst Max held up the flaming brand at arm's length that I might see to arrange my bed. The bright red flame flung a wild glare over my strange chamber; the beams of the roof that were nearest caught the light, and the bed of hay where I stood was illumined by the blaze. But further back were shadows huddled together in deep impenetrable corners, as if they had all fled there on the approach of the lurid light. Max now joined me, and with our rifles beside us, and buried in the fragrant hay, we soon fell asleep.

CHAPTER XI.

AN UNLUCKY DAY.

If not accustomed to such things, you find it rather strange on awaking in the night to hear—almost to feel, so near it is to you—the continued patter of the rain-drops on the shingle roof not many inches above your cheek. As I turned in my warm bed, and wound myself still deeper into the dense fragrant mass that composed it, I heard the gentle falling of the rain just above my face, and grumbling inwardly at the unfavourable morrow it foretokened, again fell fast asleep.

I should have been much better pleased had it come down in a good shower, rattling on the shingles as though about to shake them all to pieces, instead of that dull, monotonous, sluggish drizzle, which might continue any number of hours. The moment of half-waking consciousness was just long enough for the discontented thought.

When I next woke it was at the sound of the quar-

ters which Solacher's repeater was chiming beside me. Five and three-quarters—it 's time to be off! So kicking away the heap of hay with which each of us was so comfortably covered, we crept down into the hut. Unbolting the door, to let in the light, we put all in order, replaced everything as we had found it, and sweeping the floor made the place as neat as it was on our arrival the night before. It had ceased raining, but the sky and mountain-tops wore signs of no good promise.

We went to the rock where the two chamois had been the preceding evening. At the moment of reaching the summit the chamois sprang away in front of us, stopped at a distance, whistled, and then were off again. They had winded us as we were coming up, and had retreated before the apprehended danger long before we could approach them. It was an unfortunate beginning, for we had looked on those two chamois as our own. "It 's all my fault," said Max, vexed and angry; "I never was here yet but I stalked up the other side; and last night, as I lay thinking it over, I made up my mind to go the same way as before, and yet I took the opposite one. I don't know why I did so; I never went on that side before. If we had gone more to the right we should have got above them, and had a shot for certain. *Himmi! Donnerwetter! Der Teufi!*" he exclaimed, as he stopped a moment and reflected on the matter, and on the chance which had been thrown away.

Below us thick mists were rolling, so that it was

impossible to see anything. Presently however a sunbeam fell here and there on the peaks of the distant mountains; and, as a sweet smiling face has the power of dissipating tears or sulkiness, anon the whole snowy range was glowing in the morning light. The fog dispersed, the sky became blue, and all looked bright and cheerful. We walked on, and came to the brow of a hill from which we could overlook a large space, partly bare and partly covered with low stunted shrubs. It was a long while before we saw anything, but at last Max perceived five chamois at a distance browsing among the latschen. He pointed out to me the spot, and exactly described where I was to look for them; but in spite of all his explanations and my endeavours to find them I was unable to make out one of the dark specks which he said were chamois. We now went after them, keeping just below and on the opposite side of the ridge, and advancing far beyond the place where they stood, came round upon them in front. On our way we fell in with a solitary chamois.

"Is it one of them, think you?" I whispered to Solacher.

"I think not," he answered; and luckily we succeeded in passing without his disturbing the others. There is nothing more vexatious, when stalking, than to come thus suddenly upon some single animal, causing it to start off and alarm the very buck or red-deer that you might have got within reach of in a moment or two more. But this time no harm was done. Solacher went first, creeping along on tiptoe

over the grass, with his hat off and his neck stretched out to catch a glimpse of the game we were approaching. Quickly lowering his head, and bending together as if to make himself invisible, while his whole body was alive with excitement, he motioned me to advance. I crept forward: the chamois were already on the watch, and gazing, somewhat alarmed, towards the place where we were hidden. Another step, and I was before them: they bounded off, but I selected one, and as it moved away I fired. Maxl looked at me, first in astonishment, and then with an expression of dissatisfaction.

"Why, what's the matter with your rifle?" he asked: "the powder must be damp, or you have not the full charge: it hardly made any report at all."

I was as surprised as he. It had indeed made hardly more noise than a pop-gun, instead of the usual roar that caused the hills to reverberate.

"I don't know the reason," said I, greatly vexed at the mishap, and not a little angry at his displeasure: "such a thing never happened to me before."

"If you go on so you won't shoot much," said Maxl, growing more and more angry at the misadventure, and evidently longing, had he dared, to give me a good scolding for what he conceived was owing to my carelessness. "Why, the bullet did not go a quarter of the distance to the chamois: I would lay a wager it fell not a dozen yards from where we are. You cannot have had half enough powder, or your rifle would never have gone off in such a manner."

And with his usually merry face overcast he walked on in silence.

After having missed a shot a change comes over everything. You are no longer light-hearted as you were before, when expectation made you buoyant; you feel discontented with yourself, and, enacting in your mind the whole occurrence over again, wonder how it could possibly have turned out so unfortunately. You are not only dissatisfied with yourself, but dissatisfied with all about you. Nothing gives you pleasure; you care for nothing: one single thought alone occupies you, and that is, "If I could only have *one more* shot at him! he should not escape a second time." And all those things that at other times are looked at with delight now afford you none: you hardly cast a glance at the barrier of snow yonder high up in the sky; the sunshine does not gladden you; and in a sort of desperation you seek comfort by looking at and following the track of the game you have just missed. I do not see much sense in this, though I have often done it, and have hung over the footsteps in the soft earth or in the snow, and examined the size and depth of the impression, as though by so doing I could conjure up the animal and bring it back again.

It was now too late in the morning for any chance of a successful stalk; we therefore returned to the hut and cooked some schmarren for breakfast. As we sat over the fire with the dish between us, eating our meal in silence, I could not but think how great

the contrast between the present moment and the cheerful evening of yesterday: then how merry we were! now both were dissatisfied and spoke little. We swept up the hearth and went on our way.

In the afternoon we tried our luck once more. Going along the skirt of a wood, we saw a chamois among the trees: strangely enough he had not perceived us, though we came suddenly upon him. We kept behind the trunk of a large pine, and watched his movements. There was much thick underwood where he stood, and as he changed his position he was continually hidden by the stem of some intervening tree. Now he advanced, now retreated; for a moment he disappeared, and again his head alone was visible. One or the other of us made a slight movement; the creature heard it and looked round: he gazed for a second, then gave a sharp whistle, and dashed away into the thicket. I fired as he turned, and the sudden movement saved him, for he escaped untouched.

On our way homewards we came to a ridge that overlooked the broad side of the mountain. It was a most desolate scene: the wood had been cleared away, and felled trees were lying scattered in all directions, just as they had fallen where the axe of the woodcutter had laid them low, and the stumps that remained in the ground were sticking out on every side. The surface was broken, and torn up by rain, and by the great stems which had been dragged downwards. A log-hut some few feet high might be seen

a long way off: it rather added to the dreariness and melancholy, for there was no sign of life in or near that human habitation. Not a sound was heard; nothing stirred above the whole surface of that sad place. The grey of evening spread over the sky; the very atmosphere wore the same monotonous dull hue. It was oppressively still and very dreary; and I was glad, after long looking round in vain to catch sight of some living thing, when Maxl proposed to descend into the valley.

"Schlier See must lie yonder," said I, pointing northward; "it must be somewhere in that direction."

"Yes," said Max, "it is not very far off. A pretty set they are there! the poachers of Schlier See and of Hundham, near Fischbachau, are the most daring of any: they would as soon shoot a forester as look at him. And how the rascals served Probst once! You know Probst, don't you? he is a capital sportsman, and as courageous as a lion. Did I never tell you what happened to him near Schlier See?"

"No, what was it?"

"Why, one day he was on the mountain,—it was on the Wilder Fell Alp,—and as he was looking about for chamois he saw two men with rifles, also on the look-out for game: they were not far off, and presently they went into a hut. He waited for a long time, till he knew they had made a fire, and would be busy cooking: it was perhaps three or four hours before he saw smoke rising from the roof, but as soon

as he did down he went. He knocked open the door, and called to the men to come out and lay down their rifles; but no one stirred,—all was still. Probst then rushed into the hut, and, seizing the first fellow he saw, caught him by the throat; at the same moment the other poachers came upon him from behind and pulled him down backwards; they then beat him unmercifully, took away his rifle, watch, and hat, and, binding his hands and feet together, left him there on the ground. The Sennerinnen were all gone down into the valley, so he might have lain there long enough before any one came near the hut, and have died of hunger and cold. Well, after lying there all that night and the next day, and after trying all he could to get loose, at last on the second day towards evening he was able to free his hands, and with his teeth to undo the cords that bound them, and, weak, stiff and exhausted, he set off homewards. It was late at night when he reached his cottage; but, ill as he was for a long time afterwards, he thought himself very lucky to have escaped with his life."

It is hardly possible to conceive a more terrible situation: the prospect of death, the solitude of the mountain, the pains of hunger and cold during the long dreary night, as he lay bound hand and foot, the thoughts of home, and many other thoughts,—it must indeed have been a state of mental agony. It seems to me that the possibility of being saved, poor as the chance was,—for who was likely to pass over the mountain?—must have added to his torment. The

constant expectation, the hope from hour to hour, still unrealized and yet clung to with desperate tenacity, —all this, I think, was calculated to make his sufferings greater than if there had been no hope. With what intense longing, with what an acute sense, must he have listened for a sound! And through the night, as he lay looking up to the stars, how must he have yearned for the morning, and have been solaced when at last he saw it stealing upwards over the sky*!

But although the poachers always took signal vengeance on the gamekeepers whenever they got them into their power, on one occasion they refrained from ill-treatment; it is true, however, in this case the person whom they met was not a forester: it was the young Count D * * *, then quite a youth, and who, being passionately fond of the chase, was always out on the mountains, sometimes with the foresters, sometimes alone. He had one day given a rendezvous to Max Solacher, and was already on the mountain near the place of meeting, when he heard a shot. He fancied it was Max, who on his way had fired at a vulture or some bird, and took no notice of the circumstance. Soon after he went toward a spot where he thought he might find Max, and coming to a kind of "saddle" in the mountain, looked over. His dog had been for some minutes very restless, and thinking it was game he had scented, he reproved him silently by a sign with his hand. But in peering

* Probst has since married Maxl's eldest sister.

below, instead of chamois he saw a hat, and then another and another: several poachers were there, close beneath him, making their arrangements for the day's operations. He was so near that it is a wonder they did not see his face. Behind him all was bare, with only a single latschen where he might conceal himself. He slid back as noiselessly as possible; and when some yards away from the ridge he cocked his rifle, and passing through a ravine went up the side of a mountain opposite. Here he was quite exposed to their view, and they might easily have seen him, which indeed was the very thing he wished; for he knew that if they perceived him they would be sure to watch his movements, and wait to see in what direction he went before setting off themselves, and he hoped in the meantime Solacher might come. He went slowly up the path, sitting down occasionally, as if wholly unconscious of their neighbourhood. It seems however they did not observe him. The young Count then made a circuit, and reached a spot among some rocks, whence he could see the men as they came up out of the hollow. The path they would then have to take crossed an open piece of ground, with hardly a bush upon it, so that they would be quite exposed, whilst he was sheltered by the blocks of stone. Presently he saw their heads appearing, and soon after they came on, one behind the other. He had meanwhile double-shotted his gun, and was now in the act of raising his rifle and calling to the foremost to lay down his weapon, when

a voice from the latschen cried out, "Drop your rifle, you fellow of a Count, or it will be the worse for you!" Quick as lightning the other men turned round on hearing these words, and every muzzle was pointed to the spot where the youth was hidden. He of course did as he was bidden; and the men, not without plenty of abuse, went cautiously on their way, one of them always keeping ready to fire in case he should move or attempt to send a bullet after them.

It was evident that the man behind the latschen must have been there already when the Count took his station among the rocks, having been stationed as sentinel in case of alarm. The poachers knew the youth, which accounts for their letting him escape so easily: had Max Solacher been in his place, he would hardly have lived to tell the tale.

The men had not been long out of sight when the Count heard a shot; he imagined it was from Maxl's rifle, and that, on coming up, he had met the poachers and killed one.

But he was mistaken: Solacher, as he went along, had merely fired at some animal below him. Hardly had he done so when six men, the same mentioned above, rushed out of a hut on an Alm lower down, and looked about scared and astonished. But they could not discover whence the shot proceeded, and this bewildered them all the more. In order to be safe from a surprise they went to the middle of a large bare spot, without shelter of any kind, where grew a solitary tree, and beneath this they seated

themselves. Here they knew they were secure, as no one would approach thus unprotected within shot, and the surrounding rocks were too far off for a gamekeeper, if lurking there, to do them any harm. So they waited till it grew dark, and Maxl all the time lay above watching them. At dusk he stole away, and hastened off to a path where he thought they would pass on their way down to the valley. From the spot where he had been watching them were two paths only which it was possible for them to take; there was no other way of getting down the mountain. He chose the one which he thought the most probable, and waited in silence beside the path, well concealed, intending when they came to fire both barrels into the midst of them. He staid until eleven, when he heard at a distance the sound of their voices, by which he knew they had taken the other path.

Evening was closing in, and we hastened our steps. The light bounding motion of Solacher as he sprang down the mountain was really admirable. Over all the inequalities, stones, holes, or stumps of trees, he leaped like a roe: leaning on his long pole he jumped over everything that came in his way, or swung himself down where the broken ground caused a sudden fall in the descent; no chamois could leap more lightly. He would stop every now and then, and look round to see if I was near, and then bound forwards, and again stand and wait; for I was tired and lagged behind, which I was not wont to do. But after such

a day as this had been, and when you have missed one or two shots, the limbs seem to have lost their usual elasticity, and you plod along more wearily than at another time, when the fatigue has been twice as great, but the sport and shooting good. The path was however so bad that it was not possible to go very quickly; it was dark too, which made it still less easy. Sometimes the road was formed by the stems of trees laid side by side, now rendered slippery by water and long use. In one place, while going downhill, my foot slipped between the stems, one of which crossed my shin about half-way between the ankle and the knee. It was with no small difficulty I prevented myself from falling forwards; had I done so, the shinbone must inevitably have snapped. There is no end to the mishaps one is exposed to in the mountains, even under favourable circumstances; hence the care the hunter always takes to reach the valley while it is light; for where the path is narrow, or the descent precipitous, it would sometimes be an awkward thing to be overtaken by the night.

Long before we reached the village it was quite dark. The several foresters were at the inn that evening, and there was laughing, music, and merriment; gay as it was, yet to me, somehow or other, the evening before in the Senn Hütte seemed much more pleasant and cheerful,—the thing was, *yesterday I had not missed a chamois.*

Kobell, in one of his poems, has well represented this state of mind. He has taken a little incident of

everyday life, and made of it a complete picture. It is a Teniers scene, if you will; but it is a genuine touch of Nature nevertheless.

Vexation.

Father's so cross and grumpy,
  He keeps on scold, scold, scold;
Just now he beat poor Trouncer,
  That is so good and old:
There 's nothing right, no nothing;
  All in the house is wrong.
That Dobbin 's lame since Monday,
  Sure that won't vex him long;
The after-math 's all in now,
  So he may well be spared.
What *can* then be the matter?
  To ask, if I but dared!

"He comes! Be still, ye children!"
  The children all keep close,
And still as mice, and wonder
  What makes him so morose.
The old man cleaned his rifle,
  Then shoved it as it lay;
Lolled in the chimney corner,
  And drove his dog away.

'T is very late already;
  At last he falls asleep,
When on tiptoe the youngest
  Into the room does creep,
And whispers to the others,
  "I 've found it out, good luck!
'T is not about old Dobbin,
  He has missed a chamois buck!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE RISS.

On arriving at Kreuth we heard that the King had announced his intention of going out shooting there in a few days. It was therefore useless to remain any longer; for, until the royal hunt had taken place, all the assistant-foresters would be busy in making preparations, and there would be none to accompany me to the mountains. It may be asked, how can such an event occupy so many persons for days beforehand? In order to ensure a good day's sport, the outlying game is collected as much as possible, and made to move forwards into the neighbourhood where the royal party are to hunt. For this purpose the young gamekeepers pass along the places where the chamois have their haunts, and, by occasionally rolling a stone down the crags into the *graben** below,

* *Graben.* Literally translated, "a ditch, or trench," but in the highlands it means the rifts in the rocks on the sides of a mountain, and is used indiscriminately whether speaking of one that is five or five hundred feet deep. Sometimes the deep ones are also called "Clam," as "Schwazbach Clam," etc.

disturb the game and cause them to hold away for ground more within reach of the approaching operations. This is not a task soon done, or easy of accomplishment: from one mountain to another—though when viewed from below they do not seem far apart—is an intervening space which it may take a good half day to get over.

On such occasions the foresters do not go down into the valley at nightfall, but pass several days and nights on the mountains. They must be on the watch too for poachers, and see that none are about, scaring the chamois and sending them scampering away from their accustomed places; for when disturbed the game is off at once, and does not return again for several days.

At Tegernsee an anticipated day's sport was frustrated in this manner. I was to have gone out on the Peissenberg, where there was every chance of being able to get a shot, when the foresters came in with the intelligence that poachers had been there: reports of their rifles had been heard in that direction, and it was vain therefore for me to think of stalking with any prospect of success. Once before, when the King had intended to shoot there, the same thing occurred. The head-forester had sent some of the under-gamekeepers to watch on the mountain, with orders to remain out till the appointed day: on account of the lawless state of the country at that time (1849), he sent a gendarme to accompany them, thinking that the presence of a police-officer would

overawe the marauders, should any be met with. As might have been foretold, he was wrong in his calculation; for the power which such an individual exercises is a moral one, quite independent of his constable's staff, or, as in the present instance, of his bayonet and side-arms. Obedience to him is ceded out of respect to the law, which happened just at that time to be as devoid of dignity as power. Even in the plain the laws had ceased to be respected; it was something to excite a smile therefore thus to see stationed, high up on the mountain-top, out of the world as it were, and in presence of wild nature only, where courage and physical strength alone availed anything, one "dressed in a little brief authority," expecting to curb rough and reckless natures. While on the look-out the gamekeepers and gendarme were surprised by thirty poachers, each armed with a rifle, who at once ordered them to descend and leave them to drive the game according to their pleasure. Where the numbers presented such odds, opposition would have been ridiculous; the foresters and their companion therefore had no alternative but to return home, and announce that the intended hunt must be postponed.

These grand hunts in the mountains are very interesting, on account of the immense quantity and variety of game that is often seen, besides the opportunities afforded of observing the habits and movements of the various animals when influenced by fear, surprise, or bewilderment. At early morning the keepers and

their scouts are at the appointed places on the mountains, and at a certain time—at the hour when it is calculated the several sportsmen have reached their stations—they are all on the move. Here and there a stone is let drop; further on a young mountaineer will pass along the perpendicular descent, holding on by the trusty latschen, in order to drive out the chamois, and also to reach a spot inaccessible in any other way.

On such a day perilous places are passed. Each one takes an interest in the work, anxious that the day's sport should be satisfactory; and as the chamois love to lurk in the wildest retreats, and nooks guarded by precipices, if the men do their work well they are sure to be led along some dangerous passes. None of course is willing to lag behind or avoid the peril, but, trusting to his steady foot and unreeling brain, each dares whatever may come in his way. Thus led on by an adventurous feeling, a hunt of this kind hardly ever passes without an accident of some sort happening to the men employed. Occasionally too the mists will rise suddenly, and spread their impenetrable covering over the whole mountain range. They lie upon the air like a solid thing, and then to move even is indeed perilous: a single step, and the beater may tread, not on the firm ground, but on yielding cloud, and toppling over go sinking through an ocean of vapour to the craggy bottom.

About such matters I heard much from my guide as we walked on towards the Riss; for as soon as I

found there was nothing more to be done at Kreuth, I packed a few things in my rücksack, and driving to Glass Hütten, took thence a bye-path leading into the valley of the Isar. The peasant who accompanied me was an intelligent fellow, and knew many a story about those merry times when the mountains were fuller of game than now. And Prince Löwenstein! how often had he been out with him when he hunted there, and what sport they had had! He talked about the gentlemen who used to join the shooting parties, and was pleased to find that I knew most of them. He had, it seems, been employed as beater, and knew the mountains well, and every *Wand* and difficult place. And still he kept on recounting about the past, as one does who has a yearning after remembered joys; at moments cheerily and with bursts of pleasure, and then with somewhat of sadness in thinking that such days would never come again.

I was all the while admiring his nimbleness, as he sped on before me over the broken ground. There was an elasticity of step and an evenness in his pace that never varied up hill or down, across the stony bed of a torrent or over the smooth sward. He wore the usual short leathern breeches, and as I looked at his red-brown legs I well understood how, in former times, the English gave the name they did to their northern neighbours as a distinctive appellation; and this led me to think how in Scotland the whole country used to be roused by just such messengers as he who

was now dashing along before me,—a fellow with the least possible clothing, with little flesh, but tendons like whipcord, who knew the passes and short-cuts over the mountains, and could breast the steepest without stopping to take breath. I now comprehended how in an incredibly short space of time all the fighting men might be called together,—how

> "Each valley, each sequestered glen,
> Mustered its little horde of men,"—

when messengers swift of foot were thus sent out to spread the alarm in every direction, causing district after district to burst into a blaze; as though the burning brand that was borne along and passed from one fleet runner to the other had the power to fire men's hearts and to kindle enthusiasm. Indeed it was Malise himself who was before me, hastening on with the words of Roderick still ringing in his ears:

> "The muster-place be Lanric Mead—
> Instant the time—speed, Malise, speed*!"

We presently came upon the high road, and were at once at the Fall. A large house, singularly neat and clean-looking, with cow-house and barn adjoining, all indicative of substantial prosperity, is the dwelling of an under-forester. He was out when we arrived, which I regretted, for I had heard much of a deed of his that gave proof of his resolute intrepidity: it was as follows.

One evening, rather late, Reitsch happened to look

* The Lady of the Lake: The Gathering.

out-of-doors to see what weather it was; and as he cast his eye round toward the mountains, what should he espy but a light high up in the direction of some Alm Hütten? It was dark, and he could not see the huts, but he knew exactly where they stood. The Sennerinnen had come down to the valley some weeks before, and, as none of the under-gamekeepers were out that evening, he was sure the light could only be caused by poachers who were making their fire. Reitsch was not long determining what to do. Taking with him one of his assistants who happened to be at home, they started off for the mountain: there was a path all the way up, so that, although it was night, they reached it easily; besides they knew the road well, and had a lantern with them. On arriving at the hut, they waited till all was quiet; no more smoke rose from the roof, by which they knew that the fire was out and the men had lain down to sleep. They still waited, when presently Reitsch with a large stone dashed open the door, and both rushed in together. Startled and confused, and waking up suddenly out of their first sleep, for a moment the poachers did not know what to do, but directly after they instinctively reached out their hands for the rifles hanging near. In their flurry they could not get their weapons off the pegs; nor did Reitsch and his companion give them much time to do so, but charging down upon the band with the muzzles of their guns, they soon overpowered them. They seized their rifles directly, and the men surrendered, for unarmed they could do

nothing. There were three of them, and they begged hard to be released, making the most solemn promises for their future good behaviour; but it was in vain: the next morning at daybreak Reitsch marched his prisoners down to the head-forester's house.

Such events as these give a zest to the Jäger's life: they afford him the highest excitement, and he prefers, I am sure, a moderate number of poachers to having none at all. Would a sailor so love a sea-life were there no danger of tempest and wreck? It is the *perils* of the deep that work the charm. It was the saying of a young gamekeeper—one whom the poachers had not spared, for he had been so beaten by them that he was nearly killed—"Without poachers a Jäger's life were nothing!"

In going along we met one of the keepers, who wished us good-day as he passed; my companion told me that a few years ago this man had shot a poacher whom he met on the mountain, adding, "The ball struck him in the very middle of his forehead." He spoke of the circumstance as though it were a target at which his comrade had aimed.

From the Fall to the Vorder Riss the character of the scenery is profound sadness. At last the road leads through a pine-wood—almost black, so dark its colour; when suddenly in the distance are signs of human habitation, of care and culture, and in another moment the house of the head-forester appears.

Opposite rise the Karwendel mountains, where the Isar has its source, and on the right the summit of

the Zug Spitz is seen. It is a lonely spot, but the snowy peaks impart grandeur to all within sight of them, and in their sharp outline there is no monotony. Nor does the desolateness of the high mountains impart melancholy, it is in keeping with the wildness; the vastness of the forms around fills the mind, their grandeur however does not overwhelm, but elevates it, and leaves no room for anything like fear or sadness. One feeling only you are unable to escape—it creeps upon and holds you like an inevitable fate, and you cannot shake it off,—a sense of the awful stillness amidst which you are.

As the forester was not at home, nothing could be decided upon. I looked about me and chatted with the under-gamekeepers, one of whom had just brought home the good chamois I saw hanging on the paling at my arrival; among them too was a Solacher, brother of my friend Max and of the girls at Baierisch Zell, so with him I made special acquaintance.

"You must have a good depth of snow here in winter," I observed: "there is not much chance of getting out except with snow-shoes, I suppose."

"No, indeed," was the answer: "I have myself seen the snow thus high," pointing to a finger-post which was much taller than himself. "And you know in the Hinter Riss, if any one dies in winter, the peasants cannot even get out to bury the body."

"What do they do then?"

"They lay the corpse up in the loft under the roof, and it freezes as hard as a rock and remains quite

unchanged. When the thaw comes it is carried to the churchyard and buried."

And there were antlers to be looked at, of stags shot that season,—the last indeed but the day before, —and questions enough to ask about the game, and the places where the stags were most plentiful. Here, as everywhere, the game had been greatly thinned; but chamois were still in the mountains, and on the cold mornings during the rutting season the low hoarse bellowing of the stags might be heard reverberating across the valley.

The right of chase here had belonged until lately to His Serene Highness Prince Leiningen, and nothing could be in finer order than this whole forest while in his hands: all was done not only with princely munificence, but with skill and even taste, and the arrangements were admirably adapted for a thorough enjoyment of the chase. Up the steep wooded sides of the mountains narrow zigzag paths were cut in various directions, to enable the stalkers to move along more stealthily when looking out for the stag. On the different mountains snug hunting-lodges were built, where the Prince and his friends would stay for weeks together in the shooting season, thus avoiding the fatigue of descending to the valley when each day's sport was ended: from these lodges to the valley a mule-path was made, by which each morning fresh provisions were brought up. With his usual liberality he would allow a party to take up their abode and stalk on one mountain, while he remained on another

opposite, and in an evening the result of the day's sport was telegraphed across. The house facing the forester's was also built by His Highness; but a year or two ago the chase, which is Crown property, was claimed by the present King, and the Prince has been obliged to give up his favourite hunting-grounds, which he had put into this perfect state, and maintained with such liberal expenditure.

The road hence leads on to the Hinter Riss, lying in the Tyrolese territory. The Scharfreuter, upwards of 7000 feet high, forms here the barrier which divides the Tyrol from Bavaria; and beyond this again the Grabenkahr lifts its massy shoulders 9000 feet from where you stand. In the Hinter Riss all is wilder; the mountains are less wooded and more craggy; the dark green of the pines gives way to the grey of the rocks, and sharper lines and more abrupt forms are seen against the sky.

On the morrow the forester returned, and he was kind enough to propose that I should go out the same afternoon, and try if I could see a chamois towards sunset, when they emerge into the more open places. At three o'clock therefore I and Xavier Solacher started. We crossed the Isar, and were at once on the Grass Berg, which rises immediately over the river. Though steep, the narrow pathway cut in the side made the ascent easy enough; and as we looked upwards, or cast a glance almost straight down on the boisterous torrent, the value of that little path was felt at once: similar ones were to be found crossing and

diverging from each other on all sides, leading to the ledge of rocks or to some sheltered nook, which could not otherwise have been approached noiselessly.

Above us occasionally rose masses of bare rock, and at their base was often such a green plot of herbage as the chamois love to resort to at evening. Once we came to a gully in the mountain-side, whence rose a confused hum of waters, and a better place for a chamois could hardly be found. Xavier told me he usually met one there, yet now we scanned every part in vain.

We were nearing a turn in the path; Xavier was a step or two in front. I heard something move on one side of me, and a little in advance of where we stood. In order that the slightest sound might not be heard, I stretched out my pole to touch Xavier on the shoulder, that he might stop, or at least move carefully; but he rounded the corner without being aware that I had heard something. Hardly had he done so when he started back, and bending down, pointed to the spot whence I had heard the gentle rustling, while I quickly moved forwards to get a shot. A two-year-old buck was standing on the edge of the steep, but before I could level my rifle he was dashing downward among the bushes, to pass over to the opposite side. At once I saw three together; for a moment one stood at gaze, and at the same instant I fired.

"You have hit him!" cried Xavier: "he dropped at once: now then, let us go and fetch him." So climbing down the ravine across which I fired (called Speien Käs in Korst Graben), and up the other side, we found

the chamois hanging by his bent horns to a branch trailing near the ground. We cleaned him, the carrion crows croaking above us, and then turned homewards.

"I wonder you did not hear the chamois, Xavier," I said, as we went down the hill. "It is a pity you did not, for then we might have had the two-year-old instead; not that it much matters though."

"I don't hear as well as I did," he answered. "I was at the great festival at Munich this year, and shot in the shooting match: the thousands of shots that were fired have almost deafened me; and though I now hear better, I have still a buzzing in my ears."

"Did you get a prize?"

"I believe I shall, but it is not settled yet. Most likely the second. Out of two hundred shots eight only missed the bull's eye, and of these five were fired at the running stag*."

"But, Xavier, if you don't get a prize with such practice as that, who could possibly hope for one?"

"Oh, there were many who shot better than I did. The first prize my brother Joseph will perhaps get."

I inquired about the game he had shot, and he told me that last year thirty-six stags had fallen to his rifle. This will give an idea of the abundance of game that

* This is a figure of a stag made of wood, and put on wheels running in a groove; on the shoulder is a target, with a red heart painted on it. At 125 yards from the spot where you stand are green bushes. The stag is drawn back out of sight, and at a given signal he runs by, and in crossing the open space between the bushes the target is fired at. As the animal moves along it has quite the effect of a real stag passing through the forest.

formerly was on the mountains. He added, that one morning, when out early, he had counted seventy-five red-deer and a hundred and fifty chamois as he went along; once at Tegernsee he had seen a hundred and seventy-five chamois together; and the average number of warrantable stags shot in each district every season was twenty-four.

The quantity in other parts must have been immense. A friend of mine, who was lately on a visit to Prince Lamberg in Styria, told me what the Prince himself related to him: that since the revolution not less than ten thousand head of game have, according to his computation, been stolen from his domain, consisting of red-deer, chamois, and roe-deer. To the English reader this seems hardly credible, but from the number known to have been there formerly, and what are now left, it is certainly not an over-estimate*.

These are exciting stories for the sportsman; they stir up all his latent longings, and something very like envy creeps into his heart as he listens to them. I have always thought how natural it is that the Indian should furnish *his* heaven with the rarest hunting-grounds.

The forester came out to meet us as we approached the house: he had heard my shot, and was curious to know the result. That evening we had a consulta-

* To give a proof that it is not so, I may state that the keepers found every year eight hundred pair of antlers which the stags had shed. As the number *not* found is always considerable, some notion may be formed, from this circumstance alone, of the quantity of red-deer which must have been there.

tion about the proceedings of the morrow, and it was agreed I should try my luck on the Krammets Berg, as the surest place of meeting chamois.

"Yonder," said he, pointing toward the mountains in front of the house,—"yonder, below the ridge, are broad bare places where in a morning you are almost sure of seeing something. Should nothing be there," he continued, speaking to Solacher, "then stalk up to the ridge, and so on to the Clam. In this way you will have chances enough, for chamois are always about."

The Krammets Berg was the best mountain of all, and I was very grateful to the forester for his kindness in allowing me a day's sport there.

CHAPTER XIII.

A DAY'S SPORT ON THE KRAMMETS BERG.

By half-past three the next morning I was downstairs, and while breakfasting, Solacher was busy with his frying-pan cooking the usual meal of schmarren. We were soon off. The stars were shining brightly, yet as we passed along the pine-wood I rather followed my companion by the sound of his voice and his footsteps than by the aid of sight. By the time we got to the foot of the Krammets Berg however the darkness was waning, and one by one the stars disappeared. The strange faint dimness, similar to that which hovers over the earth during an eclipse, began to spread; the gloom rolled back, and presently red tongues of brightness announced that day was at hand. The Zug Spitz first saw its coming, and flushed in growing refulgence over the still night-bound world. As the day streamed down its sides, the mists and vapours receded, and the mountain-tops came forth, rising from out the cloudy ocean below us as from the midst

of the waters on the third day of creation. Soon the whole chain of the Tyrolian Alps was uncovered, and lay beaming before us in the first glad flush of the morning.

Above us, in our more immediate neighbourhood, the forms of things now grew more distinct. It was no wild spot nor much broken: here and there the latschen trailed along, sometimes in dense clumps and sometimes singly. In looking to the left amongst fragments of rock we saw a splendid buck: he was leisurely nibbling the buds of the green branches he found there, quite unconscious of our presence. Between us and him was a broad deep fissure, and all the intervening space was bare, so that to get near him unobserved was almost impossible. While looking at his fair proportions, and wishing that it were practicable to get even a long shot at him, he put an end to our hopes and speculations, by moving slowly away. Before doing so he turned his head in the direction where we stood, and lifting it high in the air gazed for a moment, and directly after was among the latschen. We saw him again at intervals, as he bore away to the opposite side of the mountain. It was very tantalizing, for it was a chance if we should see so good a buck that day. The older bucks are generally alone: they keep too in solitary nooks and inaccessible places; and if at early morning they are with the herd, they leave it betimes to stray and feed alone.

"Look! there are chamois!" said Xavier, pointing

to the crest of the mountain a considerable distance to the right of where we were ascending. "Don't you see them?—yonder, right up against the sky."

On the ridge were several black forms moving about,—now vanishing, then re-appearing. As we got higher we saw them quite distinctly even without the glass; and it was a pretty sight to watch them as they disported themselves, leaping and bounding over the ground. When a stag is thus seen in bold relief against the blue background no sight can be grander: his majestic form appears of a portentous size, and as he tosses his antlers in the air they seem to shake the sky.

"We must keep away to the left, or they will see us," said Xavier. "There are many together, and no doubt more are lower down, although we don't see them from here: those above will soon be moving downwards. It is lucky we were off in such good time this morning; this is just the right moment for them."

"There will hardly be a buck among them, I fear: you can't make one out, can you?"

"No, as yet those I see are all does; but there may be one perhaps lower down among the latschen."

We now kept to the left, and passed over the shoulder of the hill, so that our heads might not be seen by them as we ascended in a line parallel with the spot where they stood. The latschen through which we crept were thick, and it was difficult to get along. Once on the ridge, we still remained on the

other side, and so advanced, just keeping our heads below the sky-line. To do this is often not easy; for on the face of a mountain the northern and southern sides are not only quite different, but the change begins from the very crest; on one side the surface being smooth and grassy, and on the other an abrupt and precipitous descent, with a ledge perhaps so narrow as scarcely to afford a footing. This ledge too is not flat, but steeply sloping; and if snow be lying on it, the difficulty and danger are pretty nearly on a par.

On we went, hardly daring to raise our heads, lest the chamois, which we knew must now be near, should see and be startled by our forms. Suddenly Xavier, who was a step or two in advance, dropped to the earth: I knew what that meant, quite as well as when, a second afterwards, he said, "There they are!" pointing to a deep rent or gash in the mountain's side. This yawning chasm, or *clam*, as such are called*, began just below the summit of the mountain, leaving the ridge unscathed. In this clam three chamois were feeding: they had not yet perceived us. I cocked my rifle and stole forwards, while Xavier watched behind. They were moving along one of those narrow ledges, on the face of the rock formed by the projecting strata, and as I advanced some acute sense told them danger was near, for they lifted their heads and listened. One began to retreat; I fired, and saw the ball had told. The others sprang forward, but a second shot brought another to a stand. Neither

* The name of this one was the Röthl Clam, on the Stahl Joch.

fell at once, but both were disabled: each one went some distance along a ledge of rocks, choosing, as they always do when wounded, the most inaccessible places.

I wanted to go down along the edge of the clam and, firing across it, finish at once the two wounded animals; but this Xavier opposed.

"No," said he, "leave them for awhile: it is much better. They are both in a bad condition, and by leaving them undisturbed they will get much worse. They won't go away from the spot, and perhaps presently we shall find them dead. If you go after them now, they will make every effort to get off, and as we have no dog with us it might not be an easy matter to track them through the latschen."

"By getting down yonder," I replied, "I might certainly be able to have a shot and finish them at once; true it is far, but I would sit down to take a steady aim. As to hitting them, I am quite sure about that."

"'T is further than you think," he replied; "besides if we leave them at once we can go after the others. These three are not those we saw first."

"But they will have heard the shots, and are no doubt off by this time."

"No, they won't have heard them, for they are over the shoulder of the mountain, and lower down. Now then, let us go."

I confess I did not like Xavier's plan, for it was most painful to me to leave the chamois there, both

badly wounded, to suffer until we came back. I honestly avow I am not one of those excessively humane persons who find cruelty in the chase. To send a ball through a stag or roebuck, and so take his life at once, does not give me a pang, for I do not deem it cruel; although whenever I stand beside an animal whose life I have just taken, a sudden emotion within always keeps me silent. The taking life, the destroying that which only God can give, seems a so daring deed; and, contradictory as it may appear for a hunter to say so, my first feeling, as I look at the heap before me, which but now was such a thing for wonder, is to be astounded at what my hand has done.

For be it remembered that it is not in *killing* his quarry that the hunter's delight consists, but in the excitement of the pursuit, in the varying chances, in the "hope deferred," and above all in that crowning moment when whispering to himself, "Now he is mine!" *Then* is the real climax: in that short exquisite second *before* the death—before *quite all* has been obtained,—when the prize, the reward of all your toil and risk, is surely won, but not yet possessed,—*that* is the moment of the highest joy. You fire,—he falls, and you are well pleased; but the sensation is tame compared to the subtle, quivering intensity of what you felt before.

No true lover of the chase can he be, who estimates his pleasure only by the number he has killed: 'The Noble Arte' teaches another lesson.

Few things are more painful to the sportsman than

when, by some mischance or want of skill, he causes an animal unnecessary suffering. Unfortunately the very circumstance I am always so anxious to avoid was afterwards to happen with one of these chamois; the saddest to witness that ever occurred to me in my hunting experiences.

Giving way to my companion I left the clam, and going along the ridge above it, we crept softly down the mountain-side, so as to get on a line level with the spot where the chamois were standing. The latschen were scattered about everywhere pretty thickly; and it was as difficult to get through the stubborn branches without their rustling or rebounding, as it was to see the chamois, even when within shot of them. At last we reached a spot where we could look upon a glade, as it were, among the bushes; and here they passed or paused a moment or two as they chased each other: it was a merry company. We lay flat on the ground, with our chins in a bush, and watched them.

"I don't see a buck, do you, Xavier?" said I.

"No, I hardly think there is one. It is almost too late now. But a doe is there," he continued, with his eye still to his glass, "with curious horns: one is upright and the other grows forwards straight out of her forehead. Look," pointing with his glass, "don't you see that one to the right, half standing on a fragment of rock?—that is the one. It is a long shot, but you would hit it."

I looked and saw the curious growth, and wished to possess the trophy. But then too I longed for a

buck—to get a fair shot at a buck—and still I hoped there might be one among the herd, and that I might see him before he made for the latschen. Thus was I divided in my intentions; and hesitation, whether in stalking or in the affairs of life, is sure to lead to no desirable result. While half-resolving to make sure of the fine doe before me, the whole herd began to move. They must have got wind of us, for, gazing round, they were all out of sight in a moment. We went upwards again, and along the side of the mountain.

"Hush!" cried Xavier, "there's a chamois quite alone."

"Where? Is it a buck?"

"Yes, but make haste—it has heard us."

"Here, your rifle!" said I, holding out my hand to take his, the sights of which were very much finer than mine; and as the chamois was far off,—a hundred and eighty yards for certain,—I in this case preferred his to my own.

"Does it shoot high?" I asked, sitting down and resting my left elbow on my knee to take a steadier aim.

"No, where you aim there the bullet strikes; but hold it a little forward, for the wind is now coming up from below."

"As I have it now, the ball would graze his breast," I said, about to fire.

"That's right: you will hit him in the middle of the shoulder."

Bang! went the rifle. "He has got the ball for certain, no shot could go off better."

"You have not touched him," said Xavier, who had been watching the result through his glass: "the ball passed just before his shoulder: I saw it strike the bank behind him."

"Confound it, that's the effect of allowing for the wind! But for that I must have hit in the best place. Nothing on earth can fire truer than your rifle."

"Yes, I know it; but being so far, and as the wind is coming up from the valley, I thought it safer to make an allowance for the draught."

There was no use in being irritated; besides Xavier was so good-tempered and willing a fellow, that it would have been difficult for me to have continued angry long, had I been inclined. We kept along the ridge until we came to a descent: here we sat down to reconnoitre, and with our glasses examined the ground below. We soon espied a buck, as usual alone: he kept on the move for some time, always holding a downward course, and at last, to our great joy, lay down among some scattered latschen.

"Now then, Xavier, will you try for him?"

"Of course I will: he is certainly a good way off, and the ground is bad enough for stalking, but it is worth a trial at all events."

We noted well where the chamois lay, for though we could see the spot plainly from our eminence, we should soon lose sight of it on getting lower. It was to the left of a stony channel that the water had torn in the side of the mountain; this therefore, and a pine about two hundred yards further off, were taken

as landmarks. One more look, to be quite sure of the point to be gained, and we went down the steep. Broken as the surface was, I could not but think how admirably we both crept along. Not a stone rolled; at each step the heavy-nailed sole came upon the ground like a paw of velvet; neither of us made use of his pole, lest it might clink against the rock and cause a sound. Not once did we slip; and when the ground was so uneven that we had to step lower than usual, each steadied himself with his hand, and then the descending foot was dropped gently to the ground. A woman's step in a sick chamber is not more lovingly gentle than was that of us two iron-shod male creatures.

We halted. Xavier made signs that he thought the buck must be yonder. Here were the stones the water had washed down, and there stood the tree. True, the place appeared quite different now to what it did from above, but still on looking round we felt sure this was the spot. We moved towards the latschen, and peered downwards into the space below, but no buck was there: he must have gone away as we were coming down. As a proof that *we* had not disturbed him, but had done our work most cautiously, two does were lying not far off, just below us on a patch of green: had the buck been disturbed by us, he would, in dashing off, surely have caused them to move away too.

"Well, Xavier, now for the clam! How far may it be from here?"

"It will take us two good hours to get there: we have come a great way down, you see, and the clam is on the ridge."

"Is there no water near here?"

"Not a drop: do you want to drink?"

"Yes, my mouth is as dry as these stones. Shall we find no spring as we go along?"

"No, the only spring is down yonder. It is not very near, but if you like I will run and fetch you some."

"No, no," said I, "let us go upwards; we have no time to lose."

The day was fine and the sun shining, but the heat, though oppressive in getting up the steep, would have been nothing if I could only have assuaged my thirst, which became almost intolerable. There was however no help for it but to go on; some hours more and we might perhaps be able to obtain drink.

"How far is it now?" I asked, breaking silence, for I had been chary of my breath and was choking.

"We have an hour's walk still," answered Xavier; and we went on again in silence.

Just before we reached the clam I stumbled on a puddle. The water, which was dirty enough, had collected in a hole in the mud about as large as both my hands.

"Ah, there's water!" I exclaimed, about to stoop and take a draught.

"You surely will not drink *that*," said Xavier, in a

tone and with a look that seemed to say I was going to commit an abomination. His manner was such that I confess to the weakness of not doing as I wished and drinking of the pool.

Thirst is one of the severest trials to which the hunter in the mountains is exposed. To hunger he may get accustomed—as indeed he generally is obliged—but thirst *will* be assuaged, that *must* be satisfied. Meat is the worst thing he can take with him, for it increases his drouth to an unbearable degree. Schmarren is found so admirable, not only from the facility with which the ingredients can be carried and the meal prepared, but also on account of its being very nourishing and not exciting thirst. The fatter the food the better; a roll with the crumb scooped out and a lump of butter put in its place, is as good a thing as any to take in your rücksack.

At last we reached the clam. We saw one of the chamois only on a projecting rock, beyond which it could not go. I determined now to do what I had before wished—to get on a line with the animal and give it one last shot. With this intention I therefore crept down along the edge of the clam, keeping myself as much hidden by the latschen as possible, in order not to cause the chamois to move. On coming nearer I saw that Xavier was right; it was really further across than I had thought. However the chamois must be had, and the only way to get the animal was to despatch it first. To climb further being impossible, I sat down where I was; and having been

pleased with the precision of Xavier's rifle, I told him to give it me again, promising that this time the chamois should drop dead on the spot.

"Mind, 'tis down-hill," he said, "therefore aim low. Besides there is a strong current of wind coming up the clam, and it is well to allow for that."

In the last remark there was, I thought, some truth; for the rent in the mountain-side was as a funnel for the wind, which at this hour of the day would of course be from the valley upwards. So I took a deliberate aim just below the shoulder, at the top of the right fore-leg: according to my calculation the bullet should have lodged in the very best spot on the shoulder.

"You have broken his fore-leg,—high up close to the body!" said Xavier, who was watching for the shot through his glass.

I was so vexed that I could have hurled the rifle into the depth below me; not that it had failed in its duty, for nothing could have surpassed it in precision, having struck the animal on the exact spot at which I aimed, but that I should be prolonging the creature's sufferings—this was what incensed me; and venting my anger on Xavier, who was in no way to blame, I said, "This is the second time I have missed by following your advice: had I done as I intended both balls would have struck just as I wished."

The chamois had moved so as to be out of shot; I therefore told Xavier I would go into the clam, manage to reach the chamois, and fetch it down.

"Stay here," he answered: "I will go across and fetch it."

"No, I shall go; but you can go too if you like," I replied.

"Indeed you had better stay," said Xavier; "you don't know what it is: if you get into the clam, you will hardly come out again."

"Nonsense, Xavier! why look you—first down yonder ledge, and then to the rock. It is not very easy, but it may be managed. And once in the clam, we can climb up the other side somehow or other. Now then, come! I want to put an end to that poor beast's suffering."

"You had better not go," said Xavier gravely, and without moving a step: "you don't know what it is, I assure you. None of the gentlemen who have been out stalking here ever went in. Indeed you had better not,—you cannot tell what it is till you are in it."

"Have you been there?" I asked.

"Yes, but it is an ugly place."

"Well then, come;" and I cautiously moved toward the spot I had before indicated, as the only place where it was possible to get down into the chasm. I saw that Xavier did not at all like the expedition, and felt uncomfortable—on my account,—but he said nothing. At last we were in the bed of the clam, and a wild spot it was,—much deeper too than I had believed, and wider; and jagged rocks, now that I stood beside them, were grown to twice the size they had seemed before. There was no ver-

dure anywhere,—all was sharp, bleak, grey stone. It was an uncomfortable feeling to look up at the blue sky, and to *feel* yourself in an abyss of rock, with no visible outlet by which to regain the living world; for here was no vestige even of life. And what a stillness!

To get up the rocks where the chamois lay was indeed not so easy as I thought. Though none of them were high, some were almost perpendicular, and every little projection sharp as a needle; but, what was worse than all, each piece of stone that might have served to hold by, or as a support to rest the foot on, crumbled away beneath a moderate pressure; so that if you placed your toe or the side of your foot on such a little projection—hardly broader perhaps than the face of your watch, but still sufficient, if firm, to help you upwards—just when you thought it might be trusted, and your whole weight leaned upon the ledge, it would suddenly break like a dry stick; and if you happened to be some way up, you came slipping down again, tearing your knees, while your hands clutched at the sharp points to save yourself from rolling to the bottom. To the bottom however you were sure to go, and the less the distance it was off the better. Presently we got up again, Xavier in advance, and soon after he was above me on a narrow ledge, and sprang thence to another small crag opposite.

The space to be cleared was nothing; but it required great nicety in landing properly on the crag, and in

stopping the instant your feet rested on it, in order not to go over the other side. This pinnacle of rock was very narrow, and all below sharp and pointed. Xavier, with his rifle well up behind his back, and the pole in his right hand, was over in a second, and stood as firm and upright on his lofty narrow footing as though he had but stepped across. I doubted whether I could manage the jump: the opposite side was where the danger lay, for if I made the leap with only a little too much impetus, I should not be able to stop myself, and over I must go.

"Is there no other way, Xavier, of reaching where you now are, but by jumping over?"

"No," said he, examining the place, "you cannot cross except by jumping; it is not wide."

"No, but the other side—that's the thing: it is deep down, is it not?"

"Why yes, rather deep; but come, you can do it."

"I feel I cannot, so will not try," I replied, and began to look for some other way. The cleft itself, across which Xavier sprang, was only about twelve or fourteen feet deep; I was at the bottom of it, and while standing between the two rocks I thought I might manage to climb upwards, with my back against one wall and my feet or knees against the other, as a sweep passes up a perpendicular flue, to which this place had great resemblance. My heavy rifle inconvenienced me, but still I contrived to ascend. I was nearing the top of my chimney, when the chamois, seeing Xavier approach, leaped down into the chasm

below, so that we both had our trouble for nothing. Coming down the chimney, it not being narrow enough, I found to be more difficult work than getting up.

The chamois was now some distance lower than ourselves; before going after it therefore we looked for the slot of the one that had made off. The traces of blood on the rocks showed it had taken a direction that led out of the clam. Higher up was a much worse place than where we had just been.

"It is very difficult to get out yonder," said Xavier. "The chamois has gone there, and has probably stolen away among the latschen."

"Have you ever been out that way?"

"Yes, once," he answered: "I was up here one day, so I thought I would see if there was a way out or not; 'tis a terrible place, I assure you."

There was a broad, slanting surface of crumbling rock where we now stood, like an immense table, one end of which was lifted very high. It seemed as if this must lead out of the clam, or at least to a good height up its side; on this therefore I advanced cautiously. The slope did not end on the ground, but about twenty-five or thirty feet from it, and then fell abruptly to the jagged rocks below. The plane was so inclined that to walk there was hardly possible. Every now and then the brittle surface would crack off: however, difficult as it was, and in spite of a slip or two, I managed to proceed. At last I was obliged to go on all fours. Some minutes after I began to slip back-

ward. The stone crumbled away as it came in contact with my thickly-nailed shoes, which I tried to dig into the rock, and thus stop my descent. I strove to seize on every little inequality, regardless of the sharp edges; but as my fingers, bent convulsively like talons, scraped the stone, it crumbled off as though it had been baked clay, tearing the skin like ribands from my fingers, and cutting into the flesh. Having let go my pole, I heard it slipping down behind me, its iron point clanging as it went; and then it flew over the ledge, bounding into the depth below: in a moment I must follow it, for with all my endeavours I was unable to stop myself. I knew the brink must be near, and expected each second to feel my feet in the air. Xavier, who by some means or other had got higher, looked round when he heard my stick rebounding from the rocks, and saw my position. To help was impossible,—indeed he might himself slip, and in another moment come down upon me. He looked and said nothing, awaiting the result of the next second in silence.

I had made up my mind to go over the brink, and thought all was lost, when suddenly one foot, as it still kept trying to hold by something, was stopped by a little inequality, arresting me in my descent. I was very thankful, but still feared the piece of rock against which my foot leaned might crumble like the rest, and let me slip further. Hardly venturing to move, lest the motion might break it off, I gently turned my head to see how near I was to the brink: my foot

Comp.v.Th.Horschelt. Gedr.in J.B.Kuhn's Lith.Anstalt,München. Lith.v.F.Höhe

had stopped not a couple of inches from the edge of the rock,—but thus much further, and I should have gone backwards over it. The depth of the fall was not enough to have killed me, but quite sufficient to break a leg or arm and a rib or two. Slowly and with the utmost caution I lifted my rifle higher behind my back, and, hardly venturing even to do so, drew one knee up and then the other, and again crawled forwards.

"Be careful," said Xavier, now for the first time breaking silence, seeing the danger was past; and he went on.

He presently called to me not to come further, to stand aside and look out for stones; and directly after one came leaping down and whizzing through the air. I went toward a wall of rock that rose upright beside the inclined plane above referred to, and hardly had I reached it when larger fragments of rock came leaping by me into the chasm below: they passed close before my face, and then for the first time I comprehended the terrific force of such missiles, and the havoc they are capable of causing in mountain warfare. They were pieces of rock that Xavier had detached in climbing upwards, and the impetus with which they came whirling by made them bound back with renewed force from every object in their way, and shoot out far beyond the brink before they fell. They then swept on, out of sight, while the clam re-echoed with their rolling; but deep and oppressive as was the stillness of that yawning place, the silence

thus broken had something discordant, something unearthly in it, and I was almost glad when the sounds died away in some distant hollow*.

At length I saw Xavier making his way back again. The chamois was not to be seen. We followed its traces some distance, first however binding up my torn fingers, in order not to confound the drops of blood falling from them with that of the chamois: we saw that it had got out of the clam, and was doubtless among the latschen. Without a dog we could then do nothing, for by this time the chamois had probably ceased to bleed; and to follow it by the slot alone on the hard ground, crossed and recrossed by that of others which had passed there lately, would be impossible.

I forgot to say that, when slipping downwards, I had, in order to stop my descent, convulsively clutched at a piece of rock with my right hand, hoping to save myself. It came away like the rest; yet it caused a momentary strain on my shoulder, and seemed to jerk it out of the socket. For a second or two the arm fell helpless. I had now time to examine the limb, and finding I could lift my arm concluded all was right, and trusted that the pain would cease by the time we got home.

We now clambered down to the chamois: all was so jagged and broken that there was not a place broad enough to stand upon which was not sharp and cutting.

* The drawing facing this page is not a sketch of the clam in question, but there is much resemblance between the two.—*C. B.*

At last however we reached him, and glad enough I was to know the poor animal was out of suffering.

On looking round for a convenient spot whither we might drag the chamois, in order to clean it before putting it in the rücksack, I espied drops of water dripping from a crevice. "Water! water! Xavier," I cried with as much delight as when Cortes first beheld the sea from a peak on Darien. A cup which we had with us was quickly fixed so as to receive the precious oozing fluid, and then, with the addition of a little rum from my flask, what a delicious draught did it afford!

"Here, Xavier, drink! Was there ever such water! How icy cold, and clear!" We sat down and ate a crust of bread, while fresh drops were welling into the cup, which we had propped up with stones. How exquisite was our repast! and how strange all the features, deep down in that stony place, telling of a power which made you feel a crushing sense of helplessness!

The water came out of the solid rock drop by drop in a marvellous manner, as though Moses' rod had touched the stone and made it yield us nourishment. It was very like that ancient miracle; indeed I have many a time thought that miracles still often happen to us, only our thankless hearts fail to recognize them.

How strong and quickened we felt by our meal! and Xavier relished the smack of rum in the cup of water as much as his brother had done in the hut near Kreuth over our evening fire.

"I will look after the chamois tomorrow, with the dog," said Xavier: "there is no fear of our losing him, he is badly wounded, and is, I dare say, not far off. But now we must think of going homeward, for we have a long distance to walk and it soon gets dark. Let me see, where is the best way out?" he continued, examining the steep rock: "up yonder I think we can manage it:" and lifting the chamois on his back he at once set off. But to get up a smooth rock with a dead weight of fifty pounds at your back is not so easy; holding my pole therefore for him to step on, and disencumbering him of his rifle, which I handed up to him afterwards, he mounted the rocks, and we were soon out of the clam and on the green mountain-side. Now then homewards!

In a few hours' time we saw the forester's house among the trees, and as we came nearer—yes, surely it was no delusion—green arches erected over the road that led thither; the doorway too was festively adorned with green wreaths, and all looked gay enough. We soon learned that the King had arrived; and the whole house was in a bustle of preparation, getting the rooms in order, preparing dinner, etc., etc. All were busied sufficiently without having an extra visitor; so I determined to go on to the Fall that same night, and the next morning walk to Hohenburg, a castle formerly the residence of his highness Prince Leiningen, but now belonging to a friend of mine. I therefore bade Xavier promise he would not fail to look after the chamois on the morrow, and, taking a glass of ale and

a mouthful of bread, once more slung rücksack and rifle over my back and set off.

There was no time to lose; the evening was drawing in apace, and I had several miles before me. It was quite dark before I entered the warm room of Reitsch's house. Although I had that day been on foot for near seventeen hours, I cannot say I was desperately tired,—such is the invigorating effect of the mountain air.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FALL. TO HOHENBURG AND KREUTH.

Comfortably smoking his pipe, I found Reitsch sitting over a tankard of ale with a companion. Without asking his name I knew at once it must be Hohenadel. Before starting for the mountains a friend had said to me, "If you go to Glass Hütten, mind you see Hohenadel; he is an *Ur-mensch*"—a primeval man. And in truth many such are not be found. He is very tall, broad-chested, sinewy-armed, and his muscular legs seem as though they could support a world; he certainly would stand more upright beneath the load than Atlas is always represented as doing. And yet, despite his height and evident strength, there is nothing clumsy or even heavy in the appearance of the man. His face wears a good-humoured expression, and gives the assurance that he is as peaceably inclined as though he had no advantage over his fellows. Woe betide him however whom he finds, rifle in hand, encroaching on his domain! Hohenadel is

under-forester to his royal highness Prince Charles of Bavaria, and has before now carried down from the mountains a warrantable stag on his shoulders. Those who know anything about such matters, the weight of the animal, and the difficulty of stepping thus laden down a rugged steep, will understand the arduousness of the task. His knees trembled, it is true, beneath the weight; he bore heavily on his staff, and was obliged to rest from time to time; but—he brought it down, and alone.

As I sat over my supper, chatting with him about the chase, I asked how many stags he had shot in his life, and how many chamois.

"Oh," said he, "of stags I kept no account, but chamois I know exactly;" and he named a number which, no longer remembering it with exactness, I would rather not indicate at all. I could not but smile at the little estimation in which he held the noble red-deer, when put in comparison with his favourite chamois.

"A chamois!" he continued,—"ah, that is a different thing altogether; there is nothing equal to a chamois. I have heard a great talk of hunting wild animals in America, and I don't know where besides, but after all it can't be as fine sport as in our mountains. For what creature is there like a chamois? As many as I have shot in my time, there's no trouble, no risk that I should think too great to get a shot at one. And what a pleasure it is to watch them!"

I intended to start early the next morning for Hohenburg, and to spend a day or two there; and Reitsch wanted me to return in about a fortnight, kindly promising that if I did so I should shoot a good buck.

"By that time the rutting season will have begun, and the old bucks be on the move; they will come out of their lurking-places, and we shall be sure to get a shot. Only come," he said, "and if you were to shoot a good buck in my circuit I should be right well pleased,—only come."

Tempting as the proposal was, I was obliged to resist, having arranged to return to Kreuth, if anything was to be done there, to go out again on the mountains, and then to visit the worthy old forester at Fischbachau. By daybreak the next morning I set off, and in an hour or two reached Hohenburg, rising a little over the picturesque village of Länggries. Never before, I think, did I so appreciate the "creature comforts" of this life as now. After the detestably bad inn at Kreuth, the broad, lofty corridors, the large cheerful bed-room looking out upon the lawn, the neat arrangements, the nicely served breakfast, and the observant attendance,—mindful of everything, forgetting nothing,—all was so delicious a change, that it seemed to me as if until that morning I had never understood what such things were worth. How did all that I had hitherto looked on as mere common comforts now appear luxuries fit only for a Sardanapalus!

My Sybarite reflections were suddenly put a stop to by observing, in the mirror opposite, a projection on my right shoulder which was not on the left one, and a nearer examination really showed that one of the bones which met at the shoulder-joint was out of its socket. It was this which had pained me so when slipping down the rock in the Röthel Clam, and the sudden helplessness of the arm was now accounted for. Shortly after, being at Tegernsee, where the Court then was, I availed myself of the opportunity to show it to the Queen's physician, whom I knew; little could be done however, and I left it as it was.

After some pleasant days passed at Hohenburg, I took a guide to show me the path through the woods to Kreuth. It poured with rain during the whole day.

"Just there," said my guide, a tall fellow who had been a cuirassier, "a year or two ago I killed a good stag. It was winter, and the snow lay very deep everywhere. We were coming up early, as usual, to bring the wood down into the valley, and saw him stuck fast in a snow-drift which was over his haunches. I got near him, and knocked him on the head with my hatchet."

"But you might have helped him out, which would have been much better."

"He was half-frozen," he answered, "and quite exhausted with struggling: he would not have got over it if I had."

"And what did you do with him? Did you take him to the forester?"

"No, we kept him; we divided him between us and took him home."

"What! you kept him!"

"Oh, at that time a stag was not so much thought of as now. However it was the first and last time I ever took one, though I might often have done so. Yonder, you see," he continued, pointing to a little declivity, "was the place where they regularly crossed from one wood to the other—one might have had a shot there any morning; and in passing the hollow way as usual, that stag fell into the deepest part and could not go further. In winter-time, up here in the woods, 'tis hard work to get along, I assure you."

"Have you much to do in the forest in winter?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, "when there's snow, and it is hard enough to bear, we bring down the wood that we cut in the preceding months, which it would be impossible to do at any other time; for there are no roads up here, and the paths are so stony that no cart could move over them. But as soon as we can make a *Bahn* (a smooth hard surface on the snow) we load the wood on sledges, and so bring it down the mountain."

"'Tis hard work, is it not?" I asked.

"Ay, and dangerous too," he said: "such a load of wood is heavy, and on the smooth snow comes

down with a rush; if you slip or fall, or cannot stop yourself, and the sledge goes over your leg, it is broken in a moment: some accidents are always happening."

"But in summer it must be a right pleasant life, out in the forest all day long, and living on the mountain. You stay up there the whole week, do you not?"

"Pleasant enough it is," he said, "but 'tis hard work; and in felling the trees, seldom a summer passes without one or other of us being hurt—a foot or an arm crushed by the stems as they fall, or something of the sort."

"And how are you paid?" I asked.

"That depends: sometimes thirty-six, sometimes forty-two kreutzers a-day*. But 'tis a long day from four o'clock till dark. We begin at three, for it is light then in summer; and by the time we reach our hut in the evening, what with the air and the work, we are glad enough to cook our supper and lie down to sleep."

"And you have nothing but your schmarren," I said,—"schmarren and water?"

"Nothing but schmarren; always schmarren and good fresh water. If we had beer or anything else but water we should not get on at all for thirst. On a Saturday night, when we come down to the valley, and then on the Sunday, we drink a can of beer or so, but the whole week through not a drop. But the water we get is capital."

* 1*s.* or 1*s.* 2*d.* a-day.

"And on Sunday I suppose you have meat for dinner."

"Meat!" he exclaimed, quite astonished; "why none of us ever touches meat from one year's end to another, except may-be at the village wake and at Christmas."

"And how much fresh butter does a man want in a week—five pounds?"

"Why yes, about five pounds I think; that is as much as would go into my wooden box, which I take with me every Monday morning, and by Saturday evening it is nearly or quite empty. For you see by about six or seven o'clock in a morning we are glad of our breakfast, so we make a fire and cook some schmarren; at eleven we have our dinner; and then about four we eat something again, and before we go to bed the frying-pan is on the coals once more. All that, you know, takes a good piece of butter every day."

The huts which these woodcutters inhabit during their summer stay on the mountain are log-huts of the roughest construction. Such buildings are just high enough to stand upright in,—indeed sometimes it is not possible for a tall man to do so; but this is not necessary, for when in the hut they are either sitting round the stone hearth in the centre of the dwelling, cooking and eating their meal, or else lying down on their bed of dry leaves and straw. As there is no chimney in the roof, nor any opening beside the door or window, all within becomes in time quite black,

as though the great logs were charred by the flame. Yet in a storm, or at dusk, the sight of such a poor place of shelter is greeted with a heartier welcome than we ever bestowed on the most luxurious hotel: its low door, as we push it open and see the cheering blaze, seems then the portal of a palace.

The food of these men, though seemingly insufficient for the labour they have to endure, must afford a great amount of nourishment: not only are they strong and muscular, but their appearance is indicative of perfect health,—a testimony not perhaps quite valueless to the advocates of a vegetable diet.

Indeed I have long thought—and an interesting and instructive article in the Edinburgh Review* has confirmed my opinion—that there is a far greater degree of nourishing matter, or, to speak more scientifically, of the *protein compounds*, in bread and vegetables than has hitherto been generally believed. Were this not the case, how would it be possible for the poorer Bavarian peasant of the plain to endure such an expenditure of strength as his labours demand? It is true he soon looks old, and becomes a poor withered being, shrunken and shrivelled long before his time; but this arises as much from the constant exposure to every sort of weather in insufficient clothing, as from the inadequate quantity of the food which he takes to support life. Could he but have enough of the same most excellent brown bread, of porridge and sour-krout, and of his good Bavarian beer, his ap-

* For October, 1849.

pearance would, no doubt, be very different. However the quantity of nutritive substance in his food must be considerable, for him to suffice with so small a modicum*. In the highlands of Bavaria the peasantry live better; at all events they take a much greater *quantity* of simple food than the poorer husbandmen of the plain, and of this food good butter forms an essential part. To this sufficiency of food, and to the circumstance that by their position they are free from the toils of an agricultural life, may be attributed their healthier look, more developed growth, and their appearance of youth while still young in years.

Above I have used the words "most excellent" bread of Bavaria; nor are they employed unadvisedly, for indeed in no other country have I eaten such bread: it is what we should call wholemeal bread, and is a most palatable and nourishing food. Bread as delicately white as a French roll is of course to be had, but the other sort, slightly brown in colour, is the staple food of every household. As the Egyptians found no water so sweet as that of the Nile, so do I always return to the bread of Bavaria with an increased relish. Every

* Cabbage, when dried so as to bring it into a state in which it can be compared with our other kinds of food (wheat, oats, beans, etc.), is found to be *richer in muscular matter than any other crop we grow*. Wheat contains only about twelve per cent., beans twenty per cent., but cabbage contains from thirty to forty per cent. of the so-called protein compounds.—*Edinburgh Review*, No. 182, p. 366.

Bavarian who goes to England, pleased as he may be with all beside, greatly misses this one necessary. I have not met a single person—and I have seen many lately whom the Exhibition took there—that did not invariably remark, "If only your bread were better!" or "How bad your bread is! how we longed for some of our own*!"

The dwellings in the mountainous parts of Bavaria are also very different from those of the flat country: they somewhat resemble the cottages of Switzerland, and, in the same manner, harmonize remarkably with the scenery amid which they are placed. So much indeed is this the case, that for their particular style of architecture the mountains seem a necessary background; the two belong together: indeed the mountains are here as necessary to complete their character, as the landscape background is indispensable to the figures in the Peter Martyr of Titian.

Put any other building of brick or stone in these valleys, and the discord, so to speak, will be immediately felt. As it is, the eye finds the gently-sloping lines of the low roof—so low indeed that all its surface is discernible—again repeated in the bolder outlines rising up into the sky: there seems an affinity between them, and there is just enough connection to make them component parts of a well-ordered whole.

* At present (Dec. 1851) the six-pound loaf costs 24 kreutzers, or 8*d.* English. In the Spring the price was so low as 4*d.*, and for a short time even it cost 11 kreutzers, or $3\frac{3}{4}d.$

The same feeling which guides a painter in the composition of his picture, which urges the removal of uncongenial forms, which strives after unity by the harmonious blending of the parts—an intuitive sense of the beautiful, in short, which when put in action becomes Art—this feeling it is, which, unconsciously to himself, has guided the mountaineer in the construction of his picturesque dwelling.

Unpretending, simple as they are, even with all their rustic adornings, they never fail to be admired by the stranger. The pleasing effect they produce on every beholder arises, in no small degree, from their displaying no disparity between end and means: on the contrary, a sense of perfect purpose is experienced as you look at them; both the forms and the construction seem to have sprung naturally from the material employed. And they did so: their arrangement was dictated by the various wants and habits of the peasant, and by the climate of the country; their construction was in accordance with the material used, and adapted to the simple tools, mechanical contrivances, and particular architectural knowledge, which the self-taught peasant had at his disposal in building his dwelling. Growing up in this way,—taking a form according to the man's necessities,—not hiding, but rather displaying, the homely material which nature had provided for it,—such a building could not fail of being impressed with a decided character. There is no endeavour to conceal the simple woodwork, or to make it appear of some more valuable

stuff than it really is; nor, above all, are forms or a construction attempted, characteristic of, and legitimately belonging to, some other material. The house always looks what it is, *the house of a peasant built of wood*, fetched perhaps from the neighbouring forest; nor does it pretend to be anything more.

With the ornamental part of these buildings it is the same. Here "ornament" is no extraneous thing, but belongs exclusively to, and springs naturally from, this style of architecture. Hence the circumstance that these buildings have a peculiar and decided expression, as much and exclusively their own as that which marks the Greek, Moresque, or Pointed style of architecture. The protruding beams naturally suggest a rounding off into a more pleasing form; in the far-projecting water-spout is an opportunity for carving some animal's head and throat; and where the converging lines of the gable meet, they are allowed to run on, and crossing each other to present an additional occasion for the introduction of some characteristic decoration.

Colouring too is often used; the shutters of the lower windows will be pranked with a bright centre-piece, while the balcony and the carved design that gives such a finish to the projecting gable, will wear perhaps a more sober brown.

There is a great variety in these houses, yet every ornament, however rude in execution, is always appropriate to, and in harmony with, the dwelling it is intended to adorn. The style of ornament too is

always dictated by the material in which it is to be executed.

It is not a little remarkable that these houses are constructed according to the most scientific rules. Necessity has here proved an excellent teacher: the parts are put together with a mechanical knowledge which, as I have learned from an experienced architect, is not to be improved on. Within they are dry and warm; they have an air of comfort too, and in passing one of them you think it must be pleasant to dwell there, and snug and *freundlich* within; and even should you not see a bright winsome face at the window, the forehead and brown braided hair shaded by the brim of the green hat, with a golden tassel pendent from it dancing in the sun,—still, without such inducement, you feel that you would much like to enter there*.

My guide now pointed to a high peak on our right: "A year or two ago," said he, "a peasant was lost up there: he went out on the mountain, and never came back."

"Out poaching, I suppose—eh?"

* Should the reader of these remarks be curious to know the cost of such buildings, it is to be computed thus: one florin per square foot contained in each story, and half as much for the construction of the roof. Thus a cottage forty feet long by thirty broad, and one story high, would cost as follows:—40 x 30 = 1200 florins for the ground-floor: the same for the first story, 2400 florins; which, with 600 for the roof, makes 3000 florins, or £250 for the whole building. For this sum it could be built with a certain finish and with all the decoration usually found in such cottages. The foundations are always of stone.

"Yes, he was out with his rifle, and alone. For three whole days his friends—a band of them—scoured the mountain in search of him, but could find nothing. They knew he had gone there, because he said he intended doing so; besides the last time he had been seen alive was by a boy who met him on the way; but with all their trouble they discovered nothing.

"And what did they think had become of him?" I asked.

"Oh, no doubt he was shot, and the body hidden somewhere. A mountain, to be sure, is a large thing; yet if he had slipped down anywhere, some trace of him would surely have been found, for every part was searched day after day, and I know not how many there were out looking for him. They were in a great rage, suspecting he had been shot; and if they could have had the slightest proof of this against any of the gamekeepers, they would have taken a terrible revenge."

At last we saw Kreuth below us while crossing the oozy meadows on the hill-side; and, soaking as we both were, the smoke that crept lazily upwards through the misty rain from the chimney of the inn was a welcome and cheerful sight. I had a warm meal set before my guide; and as the days were now short, and it was important he should reach home before it grew dark, he soon set off on his way back. My first visit was to the forester's house, where I learned that Max Solacher had shot a good stag the day before,

and was now out on the mountain looking after poachers. Shots had been heard, it seems, in the direction where we had been lately, and Maxl was off at once after the invaders. Woe betide him who comes within reach of his rifle, and alone!

The stag was one of twelve, and had he been shot earlier would have been a splendid prize. But now, his lank shrunken sides made me doubly regret the necessity of thus killing everything, whether in or out of season.

On Monday it rained; on Tuesday I went out again with Max, but could not get a shot. It was afternoon, and we were going slowly upwards, when close above us we saw five men, each with a rifle at his back. Down we dropped behind a block of stone, to watch them. They were going along one behind the other on a narrow path, and talking loudly.

"Do you know them?" I asked Max, who was examining them attentively.

"Three of them I know, but I cannot make out who the two others are. Let us go on, and see what they intend."

We proceeded accordingly,—at first, on account of the unbroken surface of the ground, keeping below and parallel with them, but afterwards following in their very footsteps. Sometimes we waited to let them pass on, and only when they were a considerable distance in advance did we rise up from behind a low bush where we had been lying, and go after them again. Once, on coming to a ridge, we lost sight of

them. Before us was a vast hollow, broken here and there, and partly filled with high latschen. We sat down, and peered around for them in vain. Yet they had passed there, for we distinctly made out their trail upon the ground. Presently an unusual sound rose on the air, and came floating up from the dark hollow—it was their voices; and we now saw them going up the other side, where they all sat down, while one took out a glass and examined the slopes above which we were sitting.

"He is looking at us," said I to Solacher.

"No, he could not distinguish us where we are; besides the others are talking and laughing," he continued, still looking through his glass, "and if he had perceived us they would all be looking this way."

When they moved we rose and followed, till at last they stopped at a hut built on a clearing of the mountain: just below them lay a tree, blown down by the wind; behind this we took up our position, so near that we could almost hear what they said.

"I see!" said Maxl, "they intend stopping there tonight, to be ready betimes tomorrow morning. Ha, ha!" he exclaimed, "the door is locked and they can't find the key." The men were evidently hunting for something in all directions. Some climbed up and searched beneath the eaves, while another felt in holes and corners where the missing object was likely to be. At last it was found, and they all disappeared within the hut. Turning our heads by

chance, we saw a solitary chamois grazing on the borders of the wood, beyond where the hut stood; a deep and broad sinking in the ground separated the two slopes. We at once set off, and Max was already chuckling at the thought of bringing down a head of game close to the very quarters of the peasants.

The right of chase in that neighbourhood, Max told me, belonged to the parish within which the men dwelt; there was however little doubt they would not be very scrupulous about overstepping their boundary, if a chance of getting something presented itself. We stalked up the steep slope, keeping among the wood as much as possible; but when we looked for the chamois, he was nowhere to be seen,—he had no doubt heard the men, and was mistrustful of their neighbourhood; indeed it was strange he had not made off before.

From our covert we had a full view of the hut: the men had cooked their supper, and came out and sat under a tree to enjoy themselves; one went and fetched a pitcher of water, and set it down in the midst of them. Maxl all this while was abusing them between his teeth to his heart's content, and muttering all sorts of maledictions upon their heads. This however was not so much for what he then saw, as on account of what in imagination he saw them doing on the morrow; he knew very well that they would not stand on much ceremony about boundary-lines and limits; and even should they not shoot any of his game, their very presence disturbed the chamois,

and perhaps drove them over to the adjacent territory, and once there they became lawful booty.

A constant warfare is unceasingly carried on between these two classes of men; their reciprocal hate never slumbers, any more than their ingenuity in devising plans of vengeance against each other. Seven years ago a keeper whose game had suffered considerably from repeated depredations, and who had been unable, in spite of all his endeavours, to overtake the marauders, hit upon the following contrivance to work them injury. He knew that when they were out on the mountain they generally took shelter in a certain hut, where they made a fire and cooked their meal. He therefore procured a bomb, filled it with powder, and buried it in the hearth a little way below the surface. He hoped that by the time their schmarren was cooked, and the men were sitting round the fire enjoying its warmth, the glowing embers would have ignited the combustible mass and caused it to explode: cowering as he knew they would be round the blaze, he rightly judged the effects would be tremendous. The forester was disappointed however; the men came and kindled their fire as usual above the spot where the bomb was hidden, but from some cause or other, from being too deep perhaps, no explosion took place.

"I'll take good care they shall not get much here, at least," said Max; and cocking his rifle, both barrels thundered one after the other, and broke for some minutes the quiet of the still evening scene. "If any game is on my side of the mountain, it will be off now,"

said he; "and if they want a chamois they must go on their own ground. But look how astonished they all are at hearing a shot so near them!" And then, after waiting a few minutes to see what they would do, we went leisurely downwards to the valley.

CHAPTER XV.

BAIERISCH ZELL.

On leaving Kreuth I started once more for Fischbachau, and it was with sincere pleasure I looked forward to finding myself again the guest of the worthy forester. I should also be glad to pay the Solachers a visit, and tell them I had met their brother, to pass again a pleasant evening in their comfortable dwelling, and see once more that sweetest picture of maidenhood the gentle and blushing Marie.

From Berger I heard that the chamois had re-appeared; he had seen several during my absence, and had besides tracked a good stag near the spot where we had met the deer on the first day of our going out. He felt sure we should be able to get a shot or two, and this assurance made me all the more anxiously long for the rain to cease and the weather to clear up. But still it kept pouring down, and the whole of Saturday and Sunday not even a glimpse of blue sky was to be obtained. On Monday afternoon all changed;

the thin vapoury mist which had filled the atmosphere was swept away; in the direction of the plain glimpses of brightness were discernible, and soon the crests of the mountains showed themselves with sharp outline in the now clear air. All wore a cheerful aspect, and buoyant with hope I set off for Baierisch Zell, intending to pass the night at the Solachers' cottage, in order to be out betimes the following morning.

When thus setting out for the chase after a long imprisonment, a delicious feeling of gladness, an elasticity of heart and limb, possesses the whole being: it is an exquisite sensation. *Your* nature feels the sweet influences as much as the external nature around you. The refreshing, softening rain, that has filled every valley with a humming sound, makes your heart leap like those rivulets; the blue sky above you seems to have pervaded your mind with its serene colouring, just as it reflects itself in the glittering landscape, still trembling with rain-drops, and sheds over it a peculiar azure brightness. Expectation is rife, and as you chat with your companion while stepping lightly along, pleasantest thoughts rise with the hopeful excitement; for as to the chances which you feel sure are before you, why you would not cede them for a kingdom. Every trifle contributes to your delight: it is a pleasure even to be so well shod, and to defy the water and the pointed stones; you exult in your strength, and in the feeling of independence which that, and a firm heart, and your good rifle give you. The very obstacles you meet on your path produce a pleasurable sense of

power to overcome them. The smell of the moistened earth, and the gum-like exhalations of the pine-forest, are more grateful to you than all the odours of Araby the Blest.

As we went along, I asked Berger about the elder of the brothers Solacher, and how he was so badly wounded by the poachers. I knew he had been disabled by them, but all the attendant circumstances I had never heard, or had forgotten them.

"That happened," said Berger, "about an hour's walk from Schlier See. A great number of the foresters had had a rendezvous, to watch for poachers. I don't know how many there were, but from all the neighbouring forests some came—from Tegernsee and Baierisch Zell, Schlier See, Kreuth, and Fallep. There were altogether fifteen Jäger. They had already been out three days, and it came on very bad weather, with pouring rain. It was useless staying out any longer, so they separated to go home. The others had gone some distance, when Joseph Solacher and an assistant-forester who was with him heard a shot. They both ran forwards as fast as they could to where the report came from, and said, 'There are those rascally Kranzberger boys* shooting again! but we have caught them now, and they shall repent it.' The Kranzberger boys were two youths who lived in a

* In the mountains the word "boy" ("Bube," or in the dialect "Bua,") does not always imply one in the age of boyhood, but is used when speaking of young men generally, as Burns does the word "lads," which is equivalent to it.

hut not far off, and who, it was known, used whenever an opportunity offered to carry on poaching in a small way. Well, as I said, Joseph, and Bauer, who was with him—you know Bauer, don't you? a fine handsome young fellow as you would wish to see—he and Joseph ran forward, and when they came to the brow of the hill they heard some one loading a rifle, ramming the ball into the barrel, and a moment after saw before them, about eighty or ninety yards off, the two fellows standing over a roe they had shot. It was a little green spot, with a tree or two on it, and not too far,—just a good shot from where Joseph stood. But he did not want to fire at them; he thought he would take away their guns, and give the young fellows a sound thrashing, and then send them about their business. So, as I said, he did not fire, but went round, to be able to get nearer before he sprang forward to lay hold of them; for by going round the little mound where they stood he could steal close up to them unperceived. They must have heard something however; for at the moment that Joseph showed himself and was going towards them, one of the poachers—for Joseph now saw it was not the boys, as he thought, but two men—snatched up his rifle to fire."

"They must have been quite close to each other, were they not?"

"To be sure they were, quite close; perhaps eight or at most ten yards apart. If Joseph had not felt sure that it was the Kranzberger boys he would have been more cautious, you know, and not have exposed

himself; but he thought for certain it was they. He had gone round, on purpose to get quite close up to them before seizing them. Well, directly he saw the man level his rifle at him, there was nothing left him, unprepared as he was, but to spring behind a tree which was close by. Just as he did so the poacher fired. Joseph gave a turn, but he thought the ball had hit the stock of his gun, which he still had at his back, and it was that which caused the shock he felt; and he was going to lay hold of his rifle, in readiness lest one of the fellows should approach, when he found he could not move his arm. It hung down quite helpless like a dead thing, and then only he discovered that he had been shot. At the moment he had not felt it at all. Turning to Bauer he said, 'My God, Bauer, they have hit me!' Both stood behind the tree for awhile, but Joseph naturally could do nothing with his shattered arm. At last he said to Bauer that the pain was so great he could not bear it any longer, and that come what might he must go. The others heard all he said, for you know they were quite close, behind another tree at most seven yards off. Bauer told him to go, and he would watch the others; and if one of them moved forward to fire, he would let fly at him the same moment. Joseph went off, and they did not attempt to shoot at him. As he went along he ate a mouthful of gunpowder, and got safe home at last."

"And what did Bauer do afterwards?"

"He kept where he was behind the tree, with his

rifle raised the whole time, ready to take advantage of the least movement of the poachers which should present never so small a mark to aim at. Once he thought, if he took great care and was very steady, he might hit one. He only saw a part of his head: he fired, and shot the poacher's cap off. The bullet just grazed the tree in passing, so little did the man's head project beyond it; but Bauer thought he might manage to hit him, and, you see, he very nearly did so."

"Well, but how did the affair end?"

"Oh, there they remained opposite each other till it grew dark, and then they went off: for in the dark, you know, neither could see to fire at the other in going away. The next day they found the roebuck and the cap lying on the ground, and saw where the bullet had grazed the tree. Joseph's arm was shattered above the elbow, and it is the greatest wonder that he did not lose it entirely. He cannot use it much, but it is better than having none. It is stiff and very weak; but being the right arm, he can still shoot with a rifle, which he is very glad of."

At the Solachers' all were at home, and Joseph the elder brother too, who had returned from Munich, where he had been when I was last at his cottage. He had got a prize—the first if I remember rightly—consisting of a most splendid flag, besides a sum of about £6. The flag was of blue silk, with the royal arms embroidered in relief in the centre, and bordered with silver fringe and tassels. It was a trophy that any one might have been proud to carry off.

Though the severe fracture of Joseph's arm had been cured, so as to enable him still to fire at a target, it had caused a lameness in that side of the body, and the right leg was weak and palsied. He had received a pension for his services, and now lived with his sisters and aunt on the little estate, which, though small, was his own. The girls all welcomed me with the kindest greeting, and right pleased was I to be again among them.

Note.

It may be well to give some account of the way in which the shots are reckoned at these shooting-matches. The target is eighteen inches in diameter; the bull's-eye six. This latter however is marked with three circles, equidistant from each other. A shot in the innermost circle counts four, in the next three, and so on; while any out of the bull's-eye is not counted at all. The very centre of the target is marked by a small copper pin, and only those whose balls have touched this can have a chance of a prize. When the shots of two or more persons are of such equal pretensions as to make it difficult to decide on the priority of their claims, a fresh target is set up, and a single shot fired by each is the ordeal they have to undergo*. The usual distance at such matches is 125 yards; and the length of the barrel of the rifle is not to exceed 30¼ inches in length, nor are the bullets to be fewer in number than twenty-four to the pound. It was good shooting therefore of Xavier Solacher to hit the bull's-eye 192 times out of 200 shots, and of these eight which he missed more than the half were fired at a moving target.

As each shot is fired, the hole in the target is stopped with a wooden plug, having a number on it. This number is then entered in a book, and opposite it a 1, 2, 3, or 4, according as the ball was in one of these rings. On a second paper, which each person who takes part in the match has in his pocket, is also inscribed the number of the ring. When all is over, and after the prizes are awarded, the stakes are divided, as well as the money paid for the shots; for I should have remarked that the stakes enable you only to a limited number of shots, and all above that number must be paid for extra,

* At a shooting-match at Partenkirchen I saw a young forester strike the point, drilling a hole through the very centre of the target. But as there was another who had as good a shot to show, he determined to decide *at once* who was to be conqueror, and had a fresh target put up for the purpose. He fired, and his bullet again cut a hole in the centre of the inner ring, and this time so exactly in the middle as if it had been marked out with a pair of compasses. The other was less fortunate. There was of course some chance in thus firing two such shots in succession.

generally six kreutzers, or twopence each. The whole sum thus obtained is added together, and also the number of circles entered in the book; one is divided by the other, and the result shows how much can be given for each ring on the target. Thus, if I fire a hundred shots, and hit the bull's-eye seventy times, sometimes in the third or fourth circle, so that I count altogether one hundred and seventy rings, and if on inspecting the money in hand it is found there is enough to pay 10 krs. for each ring, I should get for my seventy shots 30 fls. 40 krs., or something more than £2 10*s*.

To add to the gaiety of the festival, the targets are so constructed that when the head of the pin in the centre is struck a cannon goes off, and the figure of a Tyrolese, or perhaps a pair of flags, suddenly rise up from behind. The marker at the target has generally some fantastic costume, and when you have hit the very centre he plays all sorts of antics, as if for joy; and while bringing the target to the umpires, dances and shouts exultingly, knowing that he will receive a small present from the lucky marksman. Altogether it is a merry scene.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE MOUNTAIN.

We were up and ready long before dawn, and Nanny with her accustomed kindness had prepared my breakfast, and stood by and chatted with me while I drank the excellent coffee which was her making, well pleased that I found all so good. It always caused me pleasure to see her bright intelligent face, and the *patois* in which she spoke gave, to me at least, an additional charm to her lively, sensible talk*.

"Joseph is going with you today," she said, "he will like to accompany you if you have no objection."

"Of course not; I shall be very glad to have him. Who would not like to have a Solacher with him on the mountain?" And so she thought too in her heart, I know; for though the last part of her sentence was added for politeness, she no doubt deemed—and was quite right in doing so—that the gain and the honour

* "A sort of Doric dialect," as Humphrey Clinker says of the Scotch, "which gives an idea of amiable simplicity."

was entirely on my side. It always pleased me to see the love and pride with which these girls invariably spoke of their brothers. There was all the sister's affection, all the genuine woman's pride, in being able to talk of them as *their* brothers. It was a theme they never tired of listening to, although they never began it; but if *you* spoke of them, their countenances betokened satisfaction, and they would say perhaps, "Yes, all the gentlemen like to go out with Maxl;" or, "Xavier is a good boy, and a good hunter too: he's a sure shot, and has won a prize this year at the great shooting-match." And when Joseph brought home his richly-embroidered flag, they were more pleased and prouder of it than if he had bought each of them a bright kerchief or a boddice worked with silver.

"Nanny," said I, "you promised me a flower for my hat, and you have not given me one yet."

"Ah, ah! because you cannot get one of the younger sister you come to me; is not that it?" she said archly.

"No indeed, my good girl, it is not so. It would, I know, be useless for me to ask Marie to give me a flower, though there is some one else, I think, who would not ask in vain."

"Well, I'll see if I have one," she said; and giving her my green hat, she went to her own room, and soon returned with a bright flower stuck jauntily beside the tuft of hair from the throat of a stag and the downy feathers that were already there—decorations in which the mountaineer takes no little pride.

Joseph, Berger, and myself now started, taking our way through the meadows and along wooded slopes, all dark, and solemn, and indistinct, despite the innumerable stars. We went towards the Miesing, and soon after daybreak were already a good distance up the mountain. Nothing was to be seen save a doe with her kid. We crossed a field of snow, and Berger, creeping forward to the ridge that overlooked a profound depth, started back suddenly, exclaiming in a whisper, "There are chamois!" They had seen him however, and were already on the move. I ran forward to meet them, and as they came on but slowly, to get a-head of them was not difficult; then lying down at full length, with my left arm resting on the ground, and the rifle pointing almost perpendicularly downwards over the rocks, I took a steady aim. I was in no hurry, in no fever of excitement, but quite calm; and, though the shot was a long one, feeling quite confident in my rifle, and certain I should hit the mark. I knew perfectly well that, firing downwards, I ought to aim *low;* and yet, instead of doing so, by some strange unaccountable perversity I aimed *high;* and purposely so, conscious all the while of what I was about. I fired, and the ball went just over the animal's back. There was no excuse for having missed; it was all owing to my own stupidity, and this only made the matter more vexatious and provoking. After the shot they turned back, and we counted eight as they passed along far below us. With our glasses we discerned a buck and a doe a

great distance off: we determined to try our chance of approaching them, and looked for a place where we might get down the rocky steep. Good practice it was too, coming down that Handsheimer Eipel Spitz! Joseph, on account of the weakness of his right arm, was carefully searching for a spot where, under such circumstances, he could manage best. Berger and myself tried elsewhere, and began to move carefully over the ridge. At first sight this seemed hardly possible, so abrupt was the descent. Snow too was lying here and there, making the little projections on which it rested a very slippery, unsure footing, and there was nothing to hold by, no support save the iron-shod pole which we carried with us.

To come down the rocks is always more difficult than to climb up them. As you invariably descend with your back to the steep, and consequently looking forwards and below you, the terrible depth is all the time before your eyes: in mounting this is not the case; and though, if you are so unwise as to think about it, you know there is a precipice at your back, it is however unseen. Carefully and steadily then down you go, your feet forwards, your body sloping back, and your trusty pole grasped with both hands, and firmly planted behind you*. Every coming step must be decided on beforehand. "There," you say,

* In going *up* hill you always have it *before* you. If the ascent is so steep as to oblige you to take a zigzag course, you plant it beside you about on a level with your hips, the upper part pointing outwards; while your body, resting with all its weight upon it, inclines inwards toward the mountain.

"the right foot can be placed, and on that point the left: yonder grows a solitary latschen; if I reach it I may then hold on and let myself down to the bit of rock below, and once there the rest will be somewhat easier." Now, your companion, who is below you—and two can always get on better in the mountains than one—drives the point of his pole into a crevice, and holds it horizontally for you to step upon; or you plant yours upright, and keeping it so, he holds by it while letting himself down over a slope of rock, whose surface is so smooth and steep that not even a cat could pass there; and when he is down he returns you the same good office, as, lying on your back with your feet in his hands, you slide slowly downward till you have found a footing.

Joseph was at a distance, among the thick branches of some latschen, and by their help he got on famously. We crept silently to a sharp rocky ridge, and looked over.

"They are still there!" whispered Joseph; "now which is the best way of getting near them? That buck is worth having."

After reconnoitring the ground, it was arranged that Berger should remain where he was, while Joseph and myself passed along the ridge, keeping our heads just below the sky-line, and go on thus till we reached some latschen; then creeping quietly through these, advance as near as possible to where the buck lay at rest, and fire. We reached the first latschen, and still the chamois remained where they were, as Berger

signalled to us. Joseph went first, winding himself through the stubborn branches with all haste; for when we had gone half-way a huge volume of mist rose suddenly from the valley, and we saw it, in thick folds, advancing with threatening speed. Once over that stony spot where the chamois were, and he knew they would be snatched from our sight; and therefore it was that he made such precipitate haste, causing him to be less cautious than he would otherwise have been. The elastic branches, instead of being put gently, almost lovingly, aside, rustled as he pressed through them, and the chamois heard it.

"Be quick!" he said, "or we shall be too late; the mist is sweeping on fast."

And just as we reached the edge of the latschen, the vast form, indistinct in outline, but of gigantic stature, trailed past. The chamois were already gone, and we afterwards saw the buck some hundred yards before us, making for the fastnesses where he knew none could follow him. He walked slowly, stopping every few paces to look back, and then uttering a shrill whistle went on again.

Right trusty friends as the latschen always prove to the chamois-hunter in his need, equally troublesome are they on other occasions. To pass a thick growth of them is an arduous business. You have no ground to tread on, so thickly are their creeping stems interwoven; and if you place your foot on their branches, it slides down, and they spring up with a jerk, knocking you probably off your balance. But it is not your

body only you must contrive to wind through them; the long pole in your hand and the rifle at your back must also accompany you, and every twig then seems a hand and fingers grasping and pulling them back. But when your work is to be done *quietly*, you groan inwardly at every step you take. Indeed the caution which, in this respect, it is necessary to observe, adds immeasurably to your difficulty. If you dared trample across the loose *débris* at will, you would find the passage much easier; and if you were not obliged to bend yourself into deformity, to achieve some yards of open space over which you dare, on no account whatever, look like the biped that you are, you would cover the ground in half the time, and every muscle would ache much less.

In going home that evening a beautiful appearance presented itself. The valley in front of us, where Baierisch Zell lay, was filled with a mystic radiance, and no one saw whence it came. For it did not hover over one part only, as shed by a foreign influence, *but it was in the air*, and emanated from it; it was the very air itself, which by some wonderful transfusion had become softened light. But as everywhere else it was dark, whence came the halo-like brightness that filled all the vale? It was as though angels had descended there, leaving behind them those faint traces of their glory long after they were gone.

It was only the moon. Though she had not yet risen on us, from the other side of the mountain she was shining on the valley through a dip in the hills. Pre-

sently however, high, high up to our right, a white brilliancy was seen coming on over the ridge. But no round orb swam into sight: great spokes of silver came instead, and frost-work, and fringe, and bars of light,—strange shapes we had never seen before. The moon had got behind the dark green branches of a latschen, and was shining through it. Berger stopped to admire and wonder: I thought of Moses and the burning bush.

The next day we were out again, and opposite the Roth Wand espied thirteen chamois. The herd was on the side of the mountain, where, by some ancient phenomenon, all had been laid waste, and covered from top to bottom with loose rolling stones. There was no bush, no prominence, behind shelter of which it was possible to advance on them; the whole broad expanse was nothing but dreary barren rubble. Ay, there they were, and here were we; but how get at them? It was arranged that Berger and I should go back, and passing up the shoulder of the mountain reach the summit; and then, keeping just beneath the ridge, make the best of our way to a certain gap, towards which, when disturbed, it was thought they would bear. So Joseph thought. Berger said they would go further on, and cross the ridge at another spot; but being the younger he gave way, and we both started off for our appointed station. Joseph staid behind, and it was agreed that in two hours he might show himself, so as to make the game move;

for in about this time, it was thought, we might get to the top. We walked fast and did our best.

As seen from below, a mountain-ridge presents gaps not seemingly of great size; but when you stand close to them they wear a different aspect. Torn, broken, crumbling, the sides overhang a gulf. Up one of these we climbed. The blocks of stone were loose, and as I clung to some of them standing but little out of the perpendicular—so steep was the place in parts—I could feel that a vigorous pull would bring them down upon me,—an unpleasant sensation where there is a fair depth below, into which you would inevitably roll! Once, when half way up, a stone on which my hand was laid gave way. I was already falling back,—I knew I was lost, and in that second of time thoughts came crowding on my mind as though each would have a hearing in the one moment which was left, and after which it would be too late. I remember quite well my sensations; that I clenched my teeth, held my breath, and that one word, the last as I thought, escaped me. It was a moment of horror. I felt that the shadow thrown by the wing of the Angel of Death was over me. My hands were still outstretched before me, involuntarily trying to clutch somewhat, and grasping only the air; when my striving fingers felt something touch them, and convulsively seizing it, held on with the locked grip of despair. It was the slender stem of a sapling latschen; it did not snap, nor did its roots give way, and to that young thing I owed my life.

After a like escape it seems a blessed privilege to breathe the sweet air in safety; yet having, as it may be said, already tasted of death, you hardly know for the first instant or two if it is quite in character to breathe or not. You look round you on the earth and sky, as a man looks on a cherished thing that he thought utterly lost, but now has found again; and you seem to love all better than before, and much more tenderly. You feel very thankful, and you carry that feeling in your heart, till you see the chamois; and then another thought possesses you,—"Shall I be able to get a shot?" I do not mean to say that the feeling of gratitude does not return—it would indeed be very sad if it did not—when you go over the whole occurrence once more, as you will be sure often to do; but the truth is that the physical exertion, the excitement, and the necessary caution, prevent your dwelling long on anything save the present moment: that is all-engrossing.

Once on the ridge, it was necessary to be very careful lest the chamois should see our forms against the sky; but with snow on the ledge, and that ledge sloping outwards, I found it rather unpleasant walking, for close beside it the crags went down precipitously full a thousand feet or more.

But the chamois must have seen us, and are moving: they are making for the gap to which Berger predicted they would go. We rush forwards, to try to head them, but it is too far. They pass, and are among the precipices of the other side before we can get there.

Thus we had spent the better part of our day in trying to approach them, and were unable to fire a shot. Going downwards now was a quick affair. The loose stones give way beneath your weight, and slide forwards, carrying you with them twenty feet or more perhaps at a time; and in this manner, leaning back on your pole, with your heels dug into the rubble, you are soon at the bottom. We were only thirty minutes thus sliding down.

We went home by the Gems Wand. We saw two fine bucks below us in a green valley, but far as they were they scented our approach.

When in the evening we gave the forester an account of our doings, on telling him about this latter herd which we had tried to get near, he said we might perhaps have been more successful if we had stuck a stick up among the stones, and placed on it a hat or handkerchief *. "Many a time," said he, "have I done so when out alone, and wishing to attract their attention in one particular direction, while I got round near them in another. There is no animal more curious than a chamois; if he sees something he has not observed before, he looks and looks to make out what it is. They will stare at and examine a thing for hours in this way; and they are then so busied with the novelty they see, that they do not look about with their usual

* In Catlin's work on America there is a print of an Indian who has adopted the same plan. He is lying in the grass, near a stick, on which a cloth is fluttering; while approaching within shot is a herd of antelopes, following one behind the other, and looking at the novelty with countenances expressive of wonder and curiosity.

watchfulness at other things. I think if you had done so they would not have observed you."

The mention of the Gems Wand reminds me of a circumstance that once occurred near there; and, being very characteristic, I relate the story as it was told to me a short time ago, by a friend who knew the particulars well. These were his words:—

"It was to the young forester's assistant, Kothbacher, that the adventure happened. He was going along the ridge of the mountain—the Geidauer Eibel Spitz it is called—and looking down, what should he see but twenty-three men standing by the hut. There is a single hut there, you know, on a green alm at the foot of steep wild rocks. Well, he looked at them a long time, and watched what they did, and thought, and thought, 'If I could only get a shot at one of them—only at one!' And so he kept on thinking how it would be possible to manage, and did not go away from the place, but observed them through his glass, until at last they began to move. There is a little path that leads from the hut right over the Eibel Spitz, and he saw that they were coming up, one behind the other; so he lay still among the latschen, and waited till they approached. By and bye—perhaps it was three-quarters of an hour, or may-be an hour after—he heard their voices. Presently he saw them winding up the path that led towards him. He allowed them to advance till they were about eighty yards distant, and then let fly at the foremost: he hit him right in the middle of the breast, and the man

dropped down on the spot, stone dead. When they heard the shot, they all stopped, and ran back some distance, and grasped their rifles. They were exceedingly astonished, for they saw no one, and could not tell where the shot came from. Kothbacher, as he lay among the latschen, could hear them talking together, and deliberating what they should do. Some were for going back, when one of them said, it was a shame to think of going away without knowing more about the matter. If even there were six or seven foresters there, what should they mind; there were twenty-three of them, and it would be a cowardly thing to turn back for a mere handful of men. Come what might, he said, he would go on, and as to the others they might follow if they liked. So with rifle in hand all ready to fire, on he went alone, straight towards the place where Kothbacher was lying concealed. He let him come on to about sixty paces, and fired: the shot turned the fellow quite round on one side; he stopped short and then fell, and when the others saw this they all turned, and were off as fast as they could go. Kothbacher now crept down the mountain among the latschen on the opposite side, keeping in the bushes, and passing through the woods so that nobody might see him. I don't know how it was, but when he came down by the Gems Wand, instead of going the way he always did, he took the path that led to Baierisch Zell. It leads, you know, over the mountain stream, and there is a very narrow path along it, and across it is a bridge—

you passed it when you came down from the Roth Wand on your road to the Solachers'. Well, when he came here he stopped to load his gun; while he was doing so—it was dusk already—he thought, as there was no knowing what might happen, he would load one barrel with shot: so in one barrel he put a ball, and a handful of shot in the other. He then sat down among the bushes to watch if any one came, for he fancied it was not unlikely that the fellows he had met on the mountain might take that path downward, and if so, they would then have to cross that narrow plank, and as they came on he might give them another welcoming. He had sat about an hour when he heard voices; they came nearer, and presently he saw men across the water, and could just make out that they all were armed. 'That 's right, he thought, they are the same; and when near, just as they were all crowded together, about to cross the bridge, he fired his shot-barrel into the midst of them. You may suppose their consternation, after having had two of their comrades shot on the mountain without seeing who it was that fired, now in the darkness to have the same thing happen once more. Kothbacher went leisurely through the bushes, and walked quietly home; but they were terrified almost out of their senses, and did not know what to do, for they never thought themselves safe, and could not tell if another shot might not come peppering in among them a moment after."

"Did he kill one with the last shot?" I asked."

"No; he said he heard quite well the shot falling

among them after he fired. He hit one only in the breast; of course he wounded him badly, but the man recovered."

"And the two he shot on the mountain?"

"One only was dead—the first he fired at: he fell directly, and never moved after. The other he hit in the shoulder, and broke his arm, so that it was obliged to be taken off. At first he thought he had killed two, for the ball knocked both over at once; but Kothbacher, you know, after the second shot, made off as fast as he could, for he did not know what the others might do, and having fired both barrels he could not defend himself. But only think what odds—one against three-and-twenty! He must have been a brave fellow, must he not?"

"I suppose they never knew who it was fired at them? Of course Kothbacher never said a word."

"Not a syllable: no, they never found it out. The fellow who was shot was the son of a rich peasant near Schlier See,—the only son too. The same night that it happened his parents heard some one knocking at the window, and a man, in a voice quite unknown to them, said that if they would go up to the Geidauer Eibel Spitz they would find their son; and next day they went, and there they found him, sure enough, lying dead."

CHAPTER XVII.

MEETING WITH POACHERS.

All-Souls' Day being a great holiday we remained at home, and I strolled out across the meadows to enjoy the morning. I went into the churchyard to look at the graves, each one adorned, as well as might be, according to the means or taste of those who brought their offerings. Some were bordered with rows of red berries, gathered in the hedgerows, with a cross of the same in the centre of the mound; while others had wreaths of evergreens, and a device made out of the cones of the fir. They were indeed very simple; but they were the offerings of affection, and showed that those who had now another home were not forgotten, and in my eyes therefore they looked beautiful. How touching is the gift of a little child, even on account of its poor worth—so incommensurate with the great amount of love it is meant to be a token of!

The forester had marked out a plan for us for the

following day, and accordingly we started early, having rather a long way to go. We soon left the road, and took a short cut across the meadows. We had not gone many steps before we came upon the traces of men's footsteps, which were discernible on the dewy grass. We looked, and looked again: there was no mistaking them.

"They are quite fresh," observed Berger; "they cannot have passed here long:" and we distinctly made out the trail of five men. "When we come to the road," he continued, "we shall be able to see which way they have taken; but I have no doubt they are gone up the mountain. Today is a sort of a holiday, and the rascals always choose such days, as they think we are at home, and consequently they are safe. They are from Hundham, that I know for certain, for they come from that direction,—the worst set in the whole neighbourhood." This village was notorious for its poachers, and not one of them but would as soon send a bullet through a gamekeeper as a roebuck.

On reaching the road we found by the footsteps that the men had entered the wood with which the slope was covered.

"Just as I thought!" exclaimed Berger; "they have gone up exactly where we are going; there is little chance now of our seeing anything today. Confound the rascals! there 's a day's sport spoiled!"

We made out that some others had taken a different direction, and that they had not all kept together. As we went up the hill Berger said: "It is well to have

your rifle ready: look if all is in order, and it will be better to put back the stoplock; for there's no knowing what may happen."

In going up the Heissen Platten we found the track of a deer in the moss and on the soft ground; and on nearer examination I saw it was quite fresh, and that the animal must have passed there but a very short time before. We followed it for some distance, but the men had no doubt scared it away, and there was not much likelihood of meeting it again. Berger was at some distance, and while waiting for him I leaned on my staff and looked at the ridge of the mountain before me, high up in the sky; while doing so I thought I saw something move. Although far away, it still was on the sky-line, where every object is more easily discerned. I looked steadily, and now was sure I had not been mistaken. It could not be a chamois, I said to myself, it was too large for that,—and a stag?—it might be, but I thought not; the movements were not like those of a stag. Keeping my eyes steadily fixed on the object, I put my hand into my rücksack behind me and pulled out my glass. The figure was now clear enough; it was a man who was walking along the ridge, with a rifle at his back. I whistled to Berger: he answered, and a moment or two after joined me. "Look up there," I said, giving him my glass; "there goes one of the fellows we tracked just now. Do you see him? just to the right of that latschen; now he is hidden—there—now he comes again!"

"I see him," said Berger; "that 's one of them, for certain.

"Now I 'll tell you what, Berger," said I; "I would rather get that fellow than the best chamois buck that was ever shot in these mountains. If we could but get him, and bring him down to the forester's house! Come, let us be after him: which is the best way?"

"There is no use in trying, I assure you," said he; "you see yourself what a distance he is off. Why, by the time we reached that ridge he might be far away on the other side, across the valley and up on the other mountain. I should like to catch him well enough, you may be sure, if only it were possible. It would take us some hours to reach the ridge where he is."

"I know that, but we may make the attempt. To take that fellow's rifle from him, and bring him down in triumph—by Jove! it would be the best day's sport I ever had in my life."

But Berger still protested against the experiment, contending that it was perfectly useless to try. So we went on, keeping away to our right—to the right of the spot too where I had seen the poacher. The whole time my thoughts were occupied with the man, and I was still longing to make him prisoner. We had mounted a long rough path among the latschen, and could now overlook the scene. Further on to the right the mountain ridge made a sweep, and there the rocks were torn, jagged, and everywhere steep precipices. It was a wild, frightful place. Far below was a chasm, but nowhere ought else but loose and

rolling stones. Around us was quite a wood of latschen, and above was the continuation of that ridge where I had first seen the man. As we moved along I suddenly stopped, and touched Berger, who was before me, with my pole, that he might do the same. He looked round, but my finger on my lips caused him to keep silence. I listened for some time, but the stillness was unbroken by any sound."

"What was it?" whispered Berger.

"Did you not hear something?"

"No."

"Well, but I did. Just above us a pebble rolled down: it was as if it had been displaced by some one's footsteps." However all was now still, and we proceeded onwards.

We had reached the ridge of the mountain, and Berger sat down to look over into the space below and try if chamois were to be seen. I chose a place a little behind him and somewhat higher. By chance I turned my head to the right, and there to my astonishment I saw, not thirty yards off, the same figure that I had observed before with my glass. I ducked my head in a second, and pressing down Berger's shoulders behind a latschen, pointed in the direction of the poacher. We lay on the ground and watched him, first with the naked eye and afterwards with our glass. He was a young peasant, of about twenty: he carried a bran new single-barrelled rifle, and the usual rücksack was at his back.

"We have him now, Berger!" I whispered.

He nodded his head, while his eyes sparkled with expectation. We let him proceed on his path, and when he was behind a piece of rising ground, rose up and stole along after him: then we again lay down pretty close to him. How both laughed, as we saw him looking carelessly about, unconscious of danger; while all the time we could have struck him with a ball when and where we chose!

"Hush! now then, don't laugh," said Berger: "as soon as we get near enough we'll rush upon him. Have you all ready?"

"Yes, yes; both barrels are cocked, and my pole—that I shall leave here in the latschen; give me yours, I'll put them together."

"But don't fire,—promise me that. You will not fire?" he asked.

"No, no, don't be alarmed; I won't fire: if however I see him attempt to raise his rifle, then down he goes."

"Very well then," he said: "now come on."

We moved along with all speed in order to get close up to him, a block of stone lying right between us; when we reached it he was only a few steps in advance. Berger turned his head to see if I was ready: I nodded, and at the same moment he sprung towards the poacher, I being close behind him. "Down with your rifle, you rascal! Lay down your rifle!" In rushing upon him however his foot slipped, and thus he lost a second, and the fellow just eluded his grasp. Had a mountain been hurled down

from above, he could not have been more startled; and no wonder: he thought himself alone, and suddenly his solitude is disturbed by two armed men, rising seemingly out of the earth and springing upon him.

"Kreutz! Himmel! Donner Wetter! Himmel Sacrament!" he screamed with fright and terror, and dashed at a bound behind a bush not a dozen paces from where we stood.

"Lay down your rifle, or by Heaven I'll fire!" I cried, raising my rifle to my shoulder and moving toward the bush, though in reality it was so thick I could not see any part of him. He knew his advantage, and cowering close did not speak or move. With the exception of the bush where the poacher lay hidden, all around was bare as the palm of my hand. My whole person was exposed had he liked to fire, and I was close to him. But there was no bravery in this; for the danger and folly of standing thus unprotected never once occurred to me. When it did, I slowly changed my position. I saw Berger a few paces further back, partly protected by the brow of the mountain, and this reminded me of what I ought to do. I therefore retreated some steps, keeping my front towards the bush and my rifle ready. I had just reached the ridge, when from the amphitheatre of rock—from that horrid abyss of crag and precipice—loud shouts were heard: they broke strangely upon the silence, and at the moment I did not comprehend what they were.

"The others are coming!" cried Berger; "there

are seven of them—they have seen us—quick, into the latschen!—follow me!"

I looked at the bush and felt sorry to leave it without driving the game from its hiding-place; but Berger quickened me, by bidding me come along, for there was not a moment to be lost. And indeed the wild cries from the band grew louder with each shout. The mountain was steep, and we were soon among the latschen, keeping our heads low that they might not betray our whereabouts, or serve for a mark to their rifles. The men's cries grew now quite distinct—"Down with the rascally Jäger!—the villains—down with them!" and every instant brought the voices nearer.

"Quicker, for Heaven's sake, quicker! they are coming on fast!" cried Berger, who was far in advance, but who now stopped to wait for me; "what keeps you so long?" The thing was, in moving through the latschen, a branch had caught the leathern strap by which I slung the rifle at my back, and the metal fastening had snapped. So now I was obliged to carry it in my hand, which was very inconvenient.

"Down with the rascals!" was again ringing behind me—"Fire at the villains!" but though they said this I do not think they saw us, or they would not have spared their balls. The latschen were thick and high, and a branch of one whirled off my hat, and whisked it away over the tops of the next bushes. To leave that behind as a trophy for the men of Hundham would never do; besides I remembered there was the

flower in it that Nancy had stuck there the day before. This determined me; so I stopped and went after my hat: I reached it at last. The fellows were near now, and never ceased their cries. We were at length out of the latschen,—a reason the more for making all speed. Berger ran on, and I close behind. He made for a spot, down which he intended to pass; we reached it. "Good God!" he cried; "it is a *Wand* (a precipice); we can't get down!" Further on there was no outlet, no way to escape; we were therefore obliged to go back again. We reached some rocks: they were not much less steep than those where we had been before, but Berger dashed down them, now rolling, now sliding, now holding on as he best could. Just above that place was an open spot,—no bush or rock, nothing but bare stones. I looked below, to see how I was to manage it, for the descent was nearly straight. Half way down a solitary latschen grew out of the rocks on one side, and I calculated that if I could catch that in passing, and hold by it, I should be all right. I was just stooping to descend, when one of the poachers sent a ball after me, to quicken me in my resolve; it luckily fell short. Berger turned, and looked up to see if I was hit. While standing on that bare spot, I no doubt presented too good a mark to let the opportunity pass unimproved. But this so enraged me, that, had I not been already scrambling downwards, I should have turned and sent a bullet back in reply; for the young fellow being foremost, it was he, I imagined, who had

fired,—he whom I had let pass unscathed, though I could have taken his life twenty times had I so willed. It was racking work, racing down that steep over the broken ground: every instant I expected another ball to be sent after us: my mouth was parched, my chest was heaving, and as soon as we reached a wood I declared I would run no further. We sat down therefore behind a tree, where we were safe enough; for if the men approached we should be sure to see them first, and we both agreed, if they did come, this time to fire. Each of us had two shots, and these would be quite enough to stop their advance. But all was still, and having rested we walked slowly homewards.

"I was right you see, Berger," I said as we went along; "it *was* a stone I heard rolling; the man was just above us at the time, and dislodged it as he passed."

"Yes, he went along the ridge to drive the game for the others, who were among the rocks; they were the same we tracked across the meadows this morning; I was sure they were bound for the mountain."

It was really very extraordinary that the whole affair turned out as it did. The poacher must have passed the spot on the ridge where we sat down, but a minute before our arrival. Had we by chance spoken in coming up he would have heard us, and would very likely have let fly at one or the other. If too we had got there one half minute sooner, we must have met face to face. It is to this moment a matter of surprise to me that the man did not hear our steps;

for we were close to each other, and neither Berger nor myself took any pains to step lightly. But not suspecting danger, and walking slowly on in a sort of reverie, his ear must have been less alive than ordinarily to a passing sound. Though the path he had taken along the mountain-top was much shorter than ours, he had proceeded very leisurely, which accounted for our reaching the same point at almost the very same moment of time.

"We won't return the usual way," said Berger; "let us go round by the fields, where we shall be sure to meet no one."

"Why?" I asked.

"Only look what a state we are in! how your clothes are torn, and mine too! If any person were to meet us, they would be sure to suspect something had happened, by our coming from the mountain thus early. We have no pole either,—a stick of some sort we must have; wait a moment and I'll cut one for each of us. There," he continued, after trimming a couple he had procured from a fence, "there, that's better than nothing in our hands: I would not be seen in this plight for anything; it is bad enough to have had to retreat before those rascals, but for it to be known, and for the people to know who it was and to talk of it, that's enough to drive one wild."

We came to a stream, and passing through it barefooted, sat down on the bank to mend our things. Needle and thread we had none; so I divided the twist of a piece of string, and making holes in the torn

garment with the point of my knife, in this wise tied up the rents. I could not help laughing at our droll figures while thus employed; but Berger looked grave, and I saw that anger was devouring him.

"Here Berger, drink!" said I, handing him the leather covering which, when it rained, I strapped over my gun-lock, and in which, for want of anything better, I had fetched water and mixed with some rum from my flask; but he refused it, saying, "I can't drink, nor eat either: something is here that seems to lace my chest together, and there is a gnawing at my stomach, as though a wolf were inside. Those rascals! For a jäger to be obliged to run before such fellows! If only they don't find our sticks,—that would be a triumph for them!"

There was no consoling him. "Had I been alone," he continued, "those rascals should not be able to say they made me run: they have something to brag about now."

"But Berger," I replied, "why did you do so then? I followed your directions implicitly, and left you to decide what was to be done. I don't think you can complain of my behaviour in the matter."

"No indeed, that's true enough; but you see, I could not know that beforehand; and besides if anything had happened to you, I should have been responsible: 'twould be said, I ought not to have led you into the danger, and all the blame would have fallen on me. But had I been alone, I should have crept into the latschen and staid there, and I know they

would not have ventured after me; and if they had, I should quietly have brought down the nearest fellow, and that would have stopped them. They would have hardly liked to risk having the contents of my second barrel sent into one of them; and even if I had fired that, I could easily have crept away without their finding me."

I am quite sure that all this was true. Once in the latschen, he would have felt perfectly safe; being able through the boughs to watch his enemy's advance, without being seen himself, and thus might bring him down with a ball, or remain quiet, as he found advisable.

As he knew the ground better than myself, I followed his directions exactly, without argument; indeed for this there was no time. He, on his part, never having been with me under like circumstances, could not tell how I should get on, and was naturally unwilling to stay on the mountain, since any awkwardness on my side might have proved fatal to me, if not to both of us. Berger's sole anxiety was for my safety, and it was this alone which caused his precipitate retreat.

When we reached home, having taken the most bye ways, in order to meet no one who might tell the men of Hundsham they had seen us returning so unusually early on that day, the forester said it would be useless to go out again at present, for the game having been disturbed would not return to its usual haunts so quickly. I therefore bade my kind host and hostess

farewell, and leaving behind a friendly greeting for the Solachers, set off the same afternoon across the Kühzagel Alp for Tegernsee, intending to go on from thence to Munich. Berger, who had a brother at a village on the lake, accompanied me. Night overtook us on the road, and we lost our way in the wood. We waited till the moon rose, and when its broad face looked in among the branches, soon found the path, and in a couple of hours reached the inn. Berger promised to look after my pole, and a letter which I received some weeks later from the forester, told me he had found it: both his and mine were still lying where we had put them. He added in his letter:—"All my endeavours to trace this dangerous band of poachers have been fruitless: I have not been able to get the least clue to any of them."

Thus ended my shooting in the mountains for 1849; and I returned to town, carrying with me a rich store of pleasant recollections.

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PREPARATION.

How pleasant an occupation is the arranging all for the coming excursion to the mountains! What an agreeable state of excitement one is in, while mustering the necessary things, and again running over the list in your mind, to be doubly sure that nothing has been forgotten. And then, too, as this or that thing is brought forth from its retreat, where it has lain well taken care of since last October or November, what gladdening associations the sight of it calls forth, and how vividly the mountain and mountain life appear before you! Ha! there is the old rücksack again—stained and discoloured by the rain and the dews, and by the blood of the last chamois that it helped to bring down from the mountain. And there are the dried, prickly leaves of the fir still among its folds; and crumbs of bread, and a hard crust too, reminding of the delicious yet simple meal on the top of the Miesing or the Krammets Berg. What a

longing it awakens to have it again at your back, and to be trudging along before daybreak over the dewy meadows of the valley! The dear old sack! it is indeed faded and weather-beaten, but its very beauty consists in being so, telling as it does of long and faithful service.

And now for the mountain stick,—here it is, tough and unbending as ever. The good old fellow! he has been a trusty friend, and helped where none else could, and when sure and timely support was a question of life or death. What a pleasure it is to have it once more in your hand! You are carried away by the impulse of the moment, and, in thought, are again on the steep declivity with the abyss in front; and so, leaning the iron point on the floor, with body bent back and whole weight resting on the good staff, the four walls and even floor of your room have disappeared, and you are on the rocks among the latschen, with the blue sky overhead. A sudden fit of impatience, that was dormant until now, has seized you: you want to be off, and begin to think it was foolish not to have started some days ago, for then you would have been on the mountains by this time. Hitherto you were calm enough, and proceeded with your task of packing and preparing with a placid serenity; but as the several objects more especially connected with the scenes where you are going again greet you after a ten months' interval, your cool business-like manner begins to disappear, and, in a word, you can hardly wait to be off.

Now then a place for these two pair of thick-soled, well-nailed shoes; and here are white woollen stockings, with the clocks worked in green; and the short leathern breeches, embroidered with green silk,—in with them all for the present! in a day or two however we shall have them on. That powder-horn we will put into the very middle, among the linen, where it will be sure to be quite dry; and here are two bottles of rum to be stowed away safely somewhere. Those cramping-irons may be left out, they are very heavy; besides their sharp points tear everything they come in contact with. And here are bullets, in a bag of sawdust to prevent their rubbing. Now let me see: in the rücksack are the telescope and hammer, and small leathern bag with balls for the day's use; and flask, and drinking-cup, and knife, et cetera, et cetera.

Yes, now I have all. The joppe must not be packed—that is to be worn; and whether on a journey, on the mountains, or in the library, a more comfortable garment is not to be found. It is at once all that may be desired,—is warm or cool, and may be worn over another coat as well as alone. This said joppe, now the national dress of the peasant of the Bavarian highlands, of Styria and the Tyrol, can lay claim to high descent; it is, with slight variation, the ancient short royal mantle that we occasionally see on the stage—such as Harry the Eighth wore—lined with ermine, and made so that it hung loosely on the wearer, or could be wrapped close should he

choose, as theatrical kings often do, to cross his arms on his breast and scowl upon mankind. There is nothing like a joppe, grey turned up with green: the ermine has disappeared, but the lineage is to be traced for all that.

And now for the rifle; but before putting it in the leathern case, just one look to see that all is in order; and up it goes to the shoulder, and we are delighted at the fineness of the sights, and should be glad to get a good long shot to test their accuracy. For, be it known, we have had some alterations made since using it last; the sight at the end has been filed away till its pin's-head shape was changed to a thinner form, and the indentation on the bridge in the middle of the barrels has also been made proportionably finer. For in firing at a great distance, if the sight in front is of coarse size, the chamois is quite covered by it; a chamois not being a very large animal. The charge too has been increased for a longer range; and since all these reforms have taken place, the rifle has not once been in requisition; so we have a double interest this time in going out with the old friend, and in seeing how he comports himself in his altered condition. He will do his duty, without doubt; and if the arm that holds him be but steady, there can be no fear about the result.

Most persons, I suppose, quite well understand the affection of the rider for his horse, whether that rider be Arab, fox-hunter, or cavalry soldier. They find it natural that the animal, which has contributed to the

pleasures of the one, or shared the dangers of the other, should be looked upon in the light of a friend, and be cherished accordingly. And they are right in thinking so. The steed shares the excitement of his master, and the natural ardour of each is a bond of union between them. But will they be able to comprehend the fondness of the mountaineer for his rifle, between which and himself there can be no such sympathy? Yet affection he does feel for it: he and it have passed many a pleasant hour together, and it has been the means of procuring him the most exciting joys. Why, his very fame as a good shot, is it not bound up with his rifle? and do not the two, like loving companions, share with each other the praises and renown? And a stronger cause for attachment still—has he not endured manifold disappointments, many a vexation, many a sad failure, with no earthly thing near him in which he took an interest, or for which he felt companionship, save his rifle? For should he have missed a stag or a chamois, and in all the bitterness of disappointment and self-reproach sits down alone to think over the event and explain how it happened, the sportsman, if he have a grain of sense or justice in his composition, will never attribute the failure to his rifle, but to his own over-hastiness or want of skill. On the other hand, when at 160 or 180 paces he has brought down a chamois, he praises his good weapon, and looks at it complacently and with cherishing regard. The reputation of my rifle I maintain as though it were mixed up with my own. Like the monarch

in a constitutional state, in my eyes it "can do no wrong;" and when a blunder is committed, I, as responsible minister, am ready to bear the blame.

Moreover I always clean the weapon myself; and, though a rifle is an inanimate thing, the care and attention thus bestowed make you like it all the more, and feel for it a certain regard. Always on my return from the forest or the mountain, let me be never so tired, or wet, or hungry, my first care is my rifle, to see that it is dry, to wipe the locks and look carefully to the inside of the barrels; and then, but not before, do I provide for myself; then comes the refreshing toilette and the pleasant meal.

It is the 14th of September: all the clocks in Munich are striking five, and the stage-coach is rolling noisily through the streets, and going southward. I and my rifle are inside, and when day breaks tomorrow, shall see the sun rising over the snows on the Zug Spitz and the Wetterstein.

CHAPTER XIX.

TO PARTENKIRCHEN.

It was about eight o'clock when the smart young peasant, who drove us from Ammergau to Partenkirchen, set us down at the entrance of the high street of the village, and bidding us farewell, cracked his whip and took the road that, here diverging, leads to Garmisch. From the principal inn issued the cheering sound of merry human voices; and the windows were full of light, and there was a bustle and a hum that, as one approached, rose upon the hush of the night, and had a pleasant influence on the traveller seeking a night's lodging. And there stands mine host—such a host as I always like to see—of fair dimensions, and in whose jolly face good-humour has ensconced itself. He looks as pleased as though the light, and gaiety, and hearty laughter emanated from him; as though he were the sun whose rosy presence thawed all into merriment. And, for aught I know to the contrary, it may have been so. He was a right jolly fellow, as

I afterwards experienced; and when, some weeks later, I lay day after day sick and lonely in bed, I was as glad to see him enter my room as when a sunbeam looked in through the window-pane.

But the house is full: there is not a bed to be had for any money, or, what would weigh still more with our worthy landlord, not even for the sake of obliging another. There is a fair tomorrow, and many are the comers from the neighbouring villages; so that the lack of house-room is as great as when independent electors throng to support independent candidates at a small country town in England.

After some vain applications elsewhere, we at length found a lodging, and the following morning I could not but think how lucky it was the inn had been full; for on peeping out of the window, there stood before me the great grey mountains of which the Zug Spitz is the last and highest peak. The sky was bright and blue, and cutting against it the sharp, hard outline of the cold stony ridge; nor could the sunbeams even, as they played upon that rock's imperturbable face, impart to it life or warmth. Our little lattice was the frame to the picture, and I soon roused my fellow-travellers to come and see what we, in our humble back room, were possessors of. Long after the others had left the window I was still looking out; and I gazed and gazed, in order to be quite assured that I was really among the high mountains.

How often do we hear children, when asking for something, insist on its being a *real* sword, or horse,

or whatever it is they wish for, and not a mere make-believe! They are always fearful they may be put off with something that is not the reality, and so there be a falling away from their brilliant imaginings. Somehow or other I carry this childish anxiety about with me still; and when a wished-for-thing is just before me, and another step will enable me to reach it, the doubt and the suspicion *will* arise, and I can hardly bring myself to believe that it is *really* so. And even this difficulty over, all my reasoning cannot make my silly self give up the fear that something may yet happen to snatch away the enjoyment. I must have the toy in my hands, before I can believe it is my "very own." And so I looked to satisfy myself that what I saw was all real; and then I looked again, to be sure that my wishes had not betrayed me into self-deception. But there was no mistake here; and it was settled these were indeed thoroughly respectable mountains, and that I with my own eyes was beholding them.

Just with such fluttering anxiety did I approach Venice for the first time. Already at Mestre, I dreaded lest, by some unforeseen cause or other, I should be transported across the Lagune otherwise than in a gondola. Could I by any piece of witchery have been carried thither through the air, I would still have preferred the gondola; for that was associated with all my boyish notions of Venice, and without it therefore the charm of that moment, so long waited for, would have been incomplete. And only when fairly seated

in it, and we had shoved away from land, did I feel sure that nothing could cheat me of my hopes. And as we emerged from the Grand Canal,—ay, there was St. Mark's, and the Masts, and the Palace of the Doge, all as I had seen them a thousand times in pictures, in drawings, and in my fancy. All was there—I missed nothing—I recognized every spot. Yet as the gondola lay moored against the steps, and the waters of the Adriatic gurgled under the prow, I still stared in wonderment, and even then asked myself, Can it really be? And at last when I stood on the pavement, and passed between the columns at the landing-place, I looked up and told myself gladly, I had lived to see the winged Lion of St. Mark.

But now to the Forester, for in his hand lies my fate. His house lay just out of the village, and so crowded was the street that to reach it was a matter of time. The booths and the gaudy throng of peasants formed a merry scene; but the prettiest spot was the cattle-market, where picturesque groups had collected,—here, some young girls with kids; there, two old men bargaining for a calf that a chubby boy was fondling; and, best of all, childhood was everywhere to be seen,—a pleasant sight always, and in any picture.

The kind forester gave me a few words to one of the under-keepers, whose district was a short distance off; and though here, as everywhere else, the game had of late been destroyed by wholesale, he still had hopes that I might get a shot.

"However I cannot promise you," he added; "for

all around there are poachers, and from the villages the peasantry go out and shoot everything they see. I think the best place for you to try will be the Oester Berg: it was a capital mountain formerly, and, though it has been well-nigh cleared, it still is the most likely one for a successful stalk. There is a hut about half-way up where you can sleep: that is to say, you will find straw to lie on and milk to drink. Bread you had better take with you."

In the afternoon, putting a few things into my rück-sack, and leaving the rest with the landlord at Partenkirchen, I started for Farchant. I soon found the forester, and we talked over the chances of seeing chamois, and where it was best to go. "You would," he said, "be more likely to get a shot on this side than on the Oester Berg. I was there the other day, and saw chamois: two bucks are there for certain, but if we shall meet them it is of course impossible to say." Then came the old tale, falling sorrowfully enough on a hunter's ear, that a year or two ago, had I been there, I might have had sport in plenty, but now all the best mountains were quite depopulated. This is a theme which at once causes a dark look to pass over the face of a forester. Angry feelings and hatred rise with a sudden gush within him, as he thinks of the times when those mountains and forests were his pride, and remembers that the stag and the chamois which he watched so lovingly have been since then swept away by bands of lawless marauders. I may safely assert that, in the breast of no set of men

have the late revolutionary changes caused such dark and bitter feelings as in those of the foresters and gamekeepers: for not only did they see that which it had been their pride to guard, at once, partly by law and partly in defiance of the laws, given over to plunder, but they found themselves with hardly a shadow of protection, while defending the little which the new order of things had left them. At first indeed it seemed as though matters were arranged to protect the thief, rather than him whose property had been stolen. For the new game-laws were partial; they were carried out too with a miserable inertness; moreover the authorities were themselves often possessed by the same spirit, subversive of order, or were influenced by fear; so that the poacher, *though caught in the fact*, had but to bear himself with effrontery and bravely lie, in order to escape scot free. He knew besides that the foresters dared not fire at him; while he, defying the law, cared little for a similar restriction. When one hears of the ill-treatment, and insolence, and danger, to which these men were exposed when this lawless spirit broke loose over the land, one only wonders how human patience could have been found so enduring, and that not more human blood was shed.

For a true sportsman it is a painful thing to see game hunted mercilessly at all times,—the dam shot away from her helpless young, and the kid destroyed when it is only a few weeks old. And this was going on the whole year round, in every spot where a deer

or chamois was to be seen, and the stolen venison sold openly under the very eyes of its lawful possessors. Most of those persons therefore who had a chase, were obliged to exterminate their game themselves, rather than have it shot and carried off by the peasantry, who were ever on the alert.

I proposed that, if we tried the Oester Berg, we should leave overnight, sleep at the hut, and so be on the mountain early.

"You can do so, if you like," said Neuner; "but if you try this side, then we start tomorrow betimes."

"How long shall we be getting up the mountain?" I asked.

"Four hours."

"Well then," I said, "we will start at four: at five it is day, and we shall be up by eight. You can come for me in the morning." And so it was decided.

CHAPTER XX.

UP THE MOUNTAIN.

The following day I was up by a quarter-past three. The morning was fine and warm, and the stars were shining with wonderful brightness. Neuner just entered, as I went into the little room below to get my breakfast.

"There is my rifle, Neuner; be so good as to load it, while I drink this cup of coffee. In the rücksack you will find the powder-horn and balls; here is the measure for the powder. I shall have breakfasted in a minute, and then we 'll be off: this half brown loaf we may as well take with us."

We sallied forth into the darkness. As we crossed the fields in the valley, the forms of the nearer mountains could be just made out, inasmuch as the gloom above was not quite so impenetrable as that which shrouded their sides and base. Now came the grey dawn, and then the ever-cheering daybreak, accompanied by that wonderful breath, moving through the

air, which is felt at no other time. To the left was the Kramer Berg, with its steep wall of rock and abrupt precipices. From every point on this side the Kramer presents itself in great picturesqueness; the grey stone and overhanging pines, and the deep ravine, are mingled together so finely that your eyes turn thitherward almost unconsciously; it juts out too, and rises at once from the plain, and the bold upward line, especially when seen in profile, gives it a commanding aspect.

"What a thorough chamois mountain that seems to be," I observed to Neuner: "what capital places everywhere for them to maintain themselves in,—just such places as the chamois love. Are many there now?"

"Formerly it was one of the very best places: now I doubt if there are any,—two or three perhaps. You might go out day after day and not see the trace of a living creature. And how the poachers used to be about! You might have heard rifle-shot after rifle-shot on the mountain continually. Garmisch, you see, lies close at the foot of it, and the Garmisch people were always out."

"As it is so conveniently at hand, most of them, I suppose, were poachers?"

"Nearly all. They are a bad set there: work they will not, and so they take their rifles and amuse themselves. I know most of them; but if I met one on the mountain, and went afterwards to the authorities to inform against him, the fellow would have a dozen witnesses ready to swear that at that very hour he was

elsewhere, and I should get no redress. Formerly the Kramer was in the Ettal district, and then I wished that it had been in mine. Well, now it is so; but as things are, I would rather not have it. Ay, formerly! that was a place indeed—the best of any here."

"On this side there are some wild-looking spots, Neuner; yonder, for example, where the rock shows through the latschen,—a difficult place that, I should think, eh?"

"Yes," he said, "ugly places are there. The gullies (*graben*) are rather frightful to look at—some of them at least. I shot a chamois on the Kramer some time ago, and he afterwards climbed to a spot where he could not get out, nor I after him; so I had to fetch a rope and let myself down by it, and then drag him and myself up again*."

"I suppose as long as the laws remain in their present form poaching will not cease. What think you, Neuner?"

* When a chamois is wounded in the flanks, the ball going through the bowels, it is always best to let it alone for some time, for it is then sure to lie down at the first convenient spot it meets with. If on the contrary you still pursue it, in the hope to get one more shot, the animal will go on and on, climbing upwards till it is at last locked in and can get no further. But the worst part is, you cannot get at it either; or if you should be able to approach near enough to put an end to the business with another ball, the chamois in falling from its narrow ledge will probably roll to such a distance, or come toppling down, dashing from crag to crag, that even if recovered it is of no good to any one, as bones and flesh will most likely be all battered into a pulp. For this reason there are certain occasions when a calm sportsman would not fire at a chamois, because he would know that, if he hit it, the creature would be sure to go tumbling over the precipice.

"Oh, the laws are well enough, if they were but executed. We have law, but there is no one to look after it. The fellows know we must not fire, so they don't care: they like to go out, and seeing how little chance there is of punishment, out they go and shoot to their heart's content."

"Do they fire at the foresters here?" I asked. "The Schlier See men do not hesitate a moment, but as soon as they see one up goes the rifle to their shoulder: whether attacked or not, it is all the same to them."

"No, here they don't: they always run away. But once I met a fellow carrying off a chamois, and called to him to lay down his rifle; he did not, and was just running to a tree, from behind which he would most likely have let fly at me, when I called to him again, 'This is the last time, you rascal! now then, or I'll fire;' and as he did not, I fired. The trigger worked rather hard, so the shot went off a little late, or the bullet must have passed through the very middle of his chest. He reached the tree however, and afterwards went away."

"And what luck the fellows have," I said: "not many weeks ago one of the park-keepers of Prince T*** fired at a poacher he caught in the park. The ball passed his ear, just touching it. And another, since then, shot a poacher's cap from his head: both got off safe."

"Well," said Neuner, "and it was but the other day a young forester near here sent twenty-six shot

into a poacher's back. The fellow took four days to get home. By good luck—or rather by ill luck, I should say—not one shot touched his neck*."

"Did he take his rifle from him?"

"No, the man crawled into a bush, so of course the other could not venture near him; but next day he came up to the spot again, bringing a comrade with him, to look for the poacher, and see what had become of him. They thought to find him there still, either alive or dead, but he was gone."

"And did you hear nothing more about him?"

"Oh yes, we knew who he was, and went to see him. He never said anything about the matter, nor complained to the authorities; and as he had got punishment enough, we did nothing more either."

I cannot give a better proof of the progress which the lawless spirit of the revolutionary movement had made among the bureaucracy, as well as the peasant class, than by repeating what my companion told me as we walked slowly up the steep mountain path.

"A short time ago, one of my men met some pea-

* As these are actual conversations, and not dialogues invented or dressed up for the occasion, I beg the reader not to make the Author answerable for any deficiency of mild forbearance or Christian love, in these or similar expressions of feeling: that is to say, should he happen to find there is a lack of either. It is the Author's intention, to the best of his ability, to give a plain, faithful picture of what he saw, and to tell what sort of people these mountaineers, and poachers, and foresters are, *and show how they feel inclined towards each other*. As to a forester feeling anything like human kindness for a poacher, this is demanding more than his sinful mortal nature is capable of; but he has plenty of human hate to give him, inveterate, deep, and unquenchable.

sants out poaching. Creeping along from bush to rock, he stalked close up to them. He looked at each, but did not recognize any of the party; the rifle however that one carried he remembered; it had been sold by auction not long before in the village, when the fire-arms that had been taken from different persons were disposed off. Well, he laid his information; but the authorities, easy as it would have been to find out the owner, have done little or nothing in the matter."

"I suppose they are afraid to act, and are besides better inclined to the poachers than the foresters."

"Both one and the other," Neuner answered. "And how savagely the villagers can behave to one of us, when they get us in their power, what I am going to tell you will show. Some time ago a poacher was missing from Partenkirchen. Between one and two hundred peasants went out to search for him, and at last found him shot dead. They instantly fancied he been killed by one of us foresters; but it was really not the case, for none of us knew anything about the matter. He had, without doubt, been shot accidentally by a comrade. Well, as soon as they found the corpse, the whole band with shouts went to the house of the assistant-keeper, but he was out. At last they found him, and taking him to the place where the corpse lay, asked, before the body, 'Were you not out in the mountains?' 'Yes,' he answered, 'but not on Thursday.' 'You lie!' they all shouted: 'you shot him.' They then beat him so unmercifully that he

was soon unable to speak, and could only hold up his hand imploring mercy."

"And what became of the poor fellow?" I asked.

"He was ill for a long time, and will never quite recover; he must have received some very severe internal injury, for though he still goes about, he is quite a different person to what he was before."

"And were any of the men punished?"

"The doctor, who was a thorough radical, said the injuries the young forester had received were slight, and the punishment therefore was also a slight one, as for a misdemeanour only. Among the mob were two or three common-councilmen (Gemeinde Räthe) of Partenkirchen, and there they are still."

We were going onwards up the stony road, when Neuner said, "Yonder to the left is a salt-lick: it is as well to look if anything is there."

We left the path accordingly, and passed among the firs with which all this part of the mountain was covered. There was little need of choosing our way here, for in front a mountain torrent rushed along so boisterously, as completely to drown the sound of our footsteps over the dry prickly leaves. We came to the edge of the bed of the stream, a deep and broad gully torn and broken up, and desolated by the swollen torrents which come sweeping down from the mountain-tops in spring-time. Heaps of rock and large stones were piled in the middle of the broad bed, besides whole trees, dried and sapless as the very stones themselves, which had been flung there like wrecks.

We did not speak in a whisper, for the waters were filling the solitude with a voice louder than ours.

"There is nothing here," I said, after looking for a minute up and down the ravine; when, just as I had spoken, from beneath a projecting part of the bank forth bounded a chamois, scared at hearing a sound suddenly jarring and breaking in upon the monotonous din that surrounded his loneliness. He leaped upon a high stone, quite unable to make out what sound it was that had intruded on the solitude. His fine ear had caught an unfamiliar tone; the loud equal hum that was in the air, and in the ground, and rolling on with the water, was suddenly interrupted; but what it was the creature did not know. He stared and listened again, terrified as men are when the cause of alarm is unseen. He presently observed us, and, springing down from his eminence, turned toward the steep on the opposite side. There he stood and gazed again, not more than fifty yards from me; but as it was only a yearling I let him pass. On he bounded, then looked back, and leisurely passed up among the trees to other haunts on the mountain-top, where his own footsteps pattering on the rock would be the only sound rising through the heavy silence.

On our way upwards we had already passed such a lick, almost hidden among the trees,—a dark and shady spot, but nothing was there. Further on was another. It was in the same gully we had seen before, and close to a waterfall, caused by the accumulated trunks and branches of trees, stones, and fragments

of rock that had here formed an embankment. We crept through the underwood, and as we came nearer I advanced alone. Kneeling among the moss, I could look down into the haunt of the chamois. On one side rose a green hillock, and about it long grass was growing, and shrubs overhung the nook, making of that patch of ground a bright verdant spot—a little oasis—amid the barrenness. I fancied to myself it must be very pleasant behind that hillock,—a cozy little home such as children, in the overflowing richness of their imagination, see with their mind's eye, and in their play will try to build up and make a reality,—a retreat that nobody is ever to know anything about, all covered over with nice yielding turf. While looking at the green bank, and dallying thus with old recollections (by the way what a simpleton my companion would have thought me, had he known what I was about) two most delicately-formed little ears rose from behind it, then suddenly disappeared. They came again, and with them this time the pretty head of a kid, nibbling a blade of grass. It was rather toying with the herbage than browsing upon it; and it pricked its ears, and bright glances darted from its dark eyes, and it leaped and disported itself in the very happiest play. I turned to Neuner, putting one finger on my lips, and then pointed down toward the watercourse. He was soon by my side. Hidden by a bush I watched for what else might come, for I knew it was not likely the kid would be alone. Its head came forth, now on one side, now on the other,

but the rest of its body always remained concealed. Afterwards another head came in sight, or rather the ears and horns only, nor could I once obtain a view of the whole animal. We remained a long time waiting for it to emerge from this chosen spot, but in vain.

"That 's a doe, Neuner," I whispered: "the horns are too fine for a buck. When they come in view again, look and you will see I am right."

"I think so too," he answered; "but we are losing time here. Let us go up higher; we shall then see behind that knoll, and if a buck is there get a shot."

Stealthily we crept back, and went higher, but on looking over the ravine saw nothing; we could not even discern the hillock which had been between us and the chamois just before.

"Shall we try a little further on?" I asked.

"No, no, it will not do any higher; they would be sure to wind us there."

It was then settled Neuner should stay here, while I returned to my former position; and when he supposed I had reached it, he was to dislodge a stone or two to alarm the chamois; and as they bounded away I should see what they were, and according to circumstances get a shot, or, might be, get none.

Presently down came a stone into the rocky ravine. The two kids pricked their ears, and looked as though they wondered what it could be, but yet not much afraid. A second is heard, hopping along the hard bed of the torrent. There is no doubt now about the danger; and off they go, thoroughly scared,—one,

two, three kids! and three does too. They look back once more, and then disappear.

We returned to the path, and soon reached that part of the mountain where the woods ceased. Before us lay the bare steep ascent, with here and there a stunted tree growing out of the rocky earth. Now all wore a different character; we were entering another region. High above us was the sharp line of the ridge's summit; that was our horizon, and thither we had to go. On our left was a deep hollow.

"There, just there," said Neuner, pointing to a wizard-looking dead tree, "I once shot a stag. It was evening, and quite dark. I was waiting for him, sitting here on this stone. He came along by yonder broken ground, and through the hollow. I could not see his antlers; however I fired, but it was too dark to look for him afterwards. As it was impossible to go home, I sat the whole night under that tree, and the worst of it was it rained all the time. In the morning I found him: he had not gone far, for by chance I had hit him well."

Some distance up the mountain was a rude log-hut. We went to it, for in such a place traces are often found indicative of who were the last lodgers, or if any one has been there beside the herdsman or the woodcutter. On the door was written—

"In the lower hut.

Wolf."

It was fastened with a wooden peg outside, so we knew there could be no one within. It was a miser-

able shelter, just high enough to stand upright in, and round some stones placed together on the ground were the remains of a wood fire. A bed of dried leaves and hay was in one corner, and after stirring and poking it about to see if nothing was hidden there, we left the place. When a poacher has rested or passed the night in a hut, he will often leave behind some marks of his sojourn; and an experienced eye will at once discover that the fragments of a meal, the scrap of paper in which something was wrapped, or the footsteps round the fire or leading to the hut, were not the traces of its legitimate inhabitants. Among the leaves, too, something or other will be occasionally concealed, to be fetched away at a convenient opportunity. Neuner said it was herdsmen who had been there, and that the fire was of their making. We saw a roebuck grazing among the latschen, but he saw us too, and soon darted from our sight.

We were now near the sky-line; a few steps more and we should be on the crest of the mountain. On nearing this boundary of my vision—the line which seems to encircle and form the limits of a world—the same sensations were always quick within me. What was beyond? On what should I look down? On cloud, and vast space, and undefined emptiness; or would wild rocks be there, and dizzy precipices; or should I be surprised by overlooking a new portion of this earth of ours, that my eyes had not yet rested on? Should I see a wide plain, with distant cities, and roads, and tortuous rivers, and thus, with a single step,

be in presence of a new tract of country, and take it in at once with one long wondering gaze? As I had never been on these mountains before, there was always this excitement on nearing the summit—a pleasurable uncertainty about what was to come. And as I crept along towards the ridge, about which, until my foot had touched it, I always felt there hung a mystery, how busily did imagination ply its work! The caution, and the watchful eye, and the breathlessness, arose as much from the awe of the moment as from the heed that is natural to the chamois-hunter. And with straining eye, and a tremulous longing, and a sense that a spell was upon me which in a second would be broken, did I creep on my knees to the very ridge, and stare over into what was beyond. But it was not until, with still gradually advancing body, I had cast my eyes over the *whole* expanse before me,—not until with a glance *all* had been passed over,—that the charm was dissolved, and that, drawing a deep breath, I felt the sweetly-oppressive mystery was dispelled.

It is a different thing altogether thus to behold a new country from the mountain-tops, or to see it as he does who advances upon it step by step along the high road. It does not come upon you gradually, object after object giving way to others as you approach, but the *whole* land bursts upon your vision at once, and your senses make you feel, by the sudden weight that presses on them, how great the vastness that the mind is labouring to take in. You have a consciousness of

extent, and range, and space, for some minutes before reason informs you about them,—a sensation that takes you by surprise, that comes rushing in upon you, and lording it for the moment over the faculties of the mind; and though this eventually gives place to a calm comprehension of extent, reaching further than the eye can follow, it is after all that *first* impression which is remembered long afterwards,—that *first sensation* of being in presence of a vast thing, but as yet uncertain, vague, and undefined; for later, when we look about for forms and mark particular outlines, there is already a diminution of the glory.

Lying on the earth we wound forwards, and taking off our hats looked down into the green valley. Far, far below chamois were seen: out came the telescopes quickly, and we counted seventeen of them. On the side of the mountain we could everywhere see their traces in the snow.

"They have been here early this morning," said Neuner: "we are rather late; those other chamois kept us so long. That is the essential thing, to be at the top early. What a bad wind we have! it comes up from behind us, without blowing up from the valley in front too."

"We could not do anything, even if they were not so far; we should never be able to reach them."

"Besides," said Neuner, who was still watching the chamois through his glass, "there is not a buck among them: they are all does."

We lay there awhile, examining the herd, and fol-

lowing their movements with our telescopes, and then I took out our brown bread, and ate, while enjoying the scene.

"Have you an apple?" I asked.

"No."

"What a pity! if you had, we could have a splendid meal. Is there no water near? for I am thirsty."

"None about here; even the nearest place is a great distance off.

Though the mountains opposite us were far away, the bells of the grazing cattle and the shouts of the herdsman came across to us distinctly, floating on the motionless air.

Our dry bread being eaten we went on. To the right was a dip in the mountain, and here we expected to see chamois. It was an inviting spot; and formerly, as Neuner told me, we should have been sure to find some. We looked around, but not a creature was visible. After a time we left our path along the ridge, and advancing among the latschen sat down and watched. We peered around in vain, examining every dark green patch of herbage, and each spot lying in the sunshine, where at this hour they would most likely be. We were both looking in one direction, and by chance at the same moment turned our heads; when behold, on a pinnacle of rock, rising among the herbage, there stood a chamois! "Look, a chamois!" each exclaimed,—a buck too! and quick as thought my finger drew back the cock of the rifle, and I was cautiously raising it, when the

creature was gone. He did not disappear with a bound, but vanished like a falling star. We looked at each other astonished, for neither very well knew how he had got on that point of rock, nor how he had quitted it; but gone he was. It was doubly vexatious, for not once in fifty times might I get a shot under such circumstances. To bring down the animal you are after is of course always pleasant, but the satisfaction is at times greatly increased by the accompanying incidents. The chamois I shot on the Roth Wand, for example, gave me a hundred times more pleasure than I should have felt in getting one of those first seen on the Miesing. The spot where the creature stands, the scene around it and you,—it is this enhances the charm, and makes the heart leap with delight. Now here was all I could wish for: from that pinnacle, on which he was poised, how he would have come toppling down through the air into the latschen below! And as I rehearsed the whole scene in my fancy, and grew more and more vexed that it had not been realized, an angry "Donner Wetter!" came rumbling through my teeth; and flinging my rifle over my shoulder I strode away.

"Do you see yonder green knoll?" said Neuner, pointing to a rock rising out of the valley, and behind which a path seemed to lead from the lower pasturages. "Well, just on that spot a poacher was shot."

"Who shot him?" I asked.

"One of the under-foresters. The fellow was a

noted poacher, and had already fired several times at the keepers. He was the most desperate in the whole country, and being well known as such they had often tried to get hold of him, and bring him in dead or alive. The young forester was quite alone, and standing just about where we are now, when he saw him from afar coming up the path; so he sat down and waited for him. He knew the path would lead him to yonder hillock, and presently sure enough he saw his head appear, and then his shoulders, and then the whole fellow. He was aiming at him all the while, but it was not until the man had reached the top of the rock, and stood before him at his full height, that he fired. The ball hit him in the centre of his chest. It was rather strange, but when struck the poacher pulled open his shirt as if surprised, looked at the shot-wound, and then falling forwards on his face dropped down dead."

From a sort of table-land below and in front of us, where a group of figures was distinctly visible, rose the sound of women's voices; and all space was filled with their carollings. A very flood of tones came rolling to us in great waves of sound; for the distance, and may-be the soft air, blended them in harmony, and made those loud and sudden gushes of song most musical. We stopped and examined them with our glasses.

"Hang them!" said Neuner, while getting out his telescope, "they are on the mountain shouting and singing all day long!"

"Who are they?" I asked.

"People digging gentian-roots; they are always seeking them, and disturbing the game; it never has any peace. There are two women and a man," continued he, examining them with his glass; "they are not from Partenkirchen, but come from a village yonder."

Though far away we could hear them distinctly when they spoke, and their hearty laugh came ringing on our ear, and sounded gladdening among those lonely rocks.

We were ascending the last rise of the mountain, when Bursch (the dog) came running to us in evident fear.

"Himmel, Donner Wetter!" cried Neuner, seizing his rifle with the quickness of thought: instinctively I seized mine while springing round to meet the danger, and cocked it in a second; for I thought a poacher had stolen upon us and was close at hand. But it was no such enemy that Bursch had run from: a large vulture was wheeling upwards and bearing away from us, and was now so far that it would have been useless to send a bullet after him in his flight.

"Had we seen him sooner, I might have had a shot," said Neuner. "Four florins are given for every one we deliver to the head-forester."

"Are they very large?" I asked.

"Seven feet from wing to wing; and they are strong too; they carry away the young kids. When the chamois see one wheeling in the air, there is a

terrible commotion, the poor helpless things are so frightened. I have often watched them: they all run together, and huddle as close as possible with the kids in the middle, and wait tremblingly till their enemy is gone."

After continuing along the crest of the mountain for some time, we again sat down on a commanding spot, to look if anything was to be seen. We saw nothing; so at last I gave up the search, and let my eyes wander dreamily around, just at they listed, without aim or purpose. I saw all, but it was supinely, and with the happy consciousness that not one single object concerned me, or could disturb my delicious inactivity,—a sweet state of utter indolence. The early hour of rising, the fatigue and the excitement, all induce this calm and dozing listlessness. The muscles relax kindly, and the whole body reposes in a state of slothful Eastern ease.

While thus outstretched upon the earth, my elbow buried in the grass, and my head resting on my hand, gradually my eyes wandered to fewer objects, and at last gazed with but little consciousness at a single one. Slowly a thin veil moved before it; I heard the voices of the women floating lullingly on the air, and indistinct remembrances were lazily trying to marshal themselves into some sort of order in my brain, but they could not accomplish it. The carol of the gentian-gatherers was now as a low hum in my ear, and from the valley there rose a mist, and then a rolling cloud. I fell asleep.

Suddenly there came a shock; a hand was upon me, and a voice said, "There is a chamois!" I was wide awake in an instant, and involuntarily cocking the rifle on which my hand rested while I slept, I started to my feet.

"Oh, it is too far to fire," said Neuner. "There he is!"

"I see it!" And there stood, far below us among the thick latschen, a fine chamois. Out came the telescope. His fore feet were on a fragment of rock, his sloping back was towards us, and his neck stretched out, with the head knowingly on one side, as though he were listening. He stood so for a long time immoveable; it was evident he did not know what to make of it.

"Perhaps he hears those women," I observed; "or, as he is looking downwards, may-be a herdsman is passing below. What shall we do?"

"We will wait and see what *he* does," said Neuner.

But he still remained, and gazed and listened. And well might he tarry, for from the rocks above no danger could reach him; and to approach where he stood without being perceived was next to impossible. Yet he was mistrustful, and soon skipped lightly away. The manner of his leaving the spot, however, showed he was not frightened; prudence, rather than fear, had induced him to change his position. I knew therefore he would not go far: he would not bound headlong on without stop or stay, as when his fine sense of hearing warned him of danger being near, or the taint

of the hunter floated toward him on the air, streaming over a sudden dip of the mountain. He was most likely among the latschen, so we hastened back some distance, and down the rocks, in order to meet him should he come that way. But we saw no trace of him, though every bush and spot was examined most carefully.

"He cannot have passed, Neuner," I said: "he *must* be among the latschen. Perhaps he is behind that upright rock yonder; I will go forward and see." And leaving my long pole behind me, I went carefully through the latschen and looked over the precipice. It went down quite perpendicular two hundred feet, and from my pinnacle I had a good view around, but saw nothing of the chamois.

We regained our ridge by climbing a steep, so long and slippery that I was right glad when it was behind us. We sat down to rest. Opposite was the Kramer, and rising above this was the Zug Spitz range, grand and mighty in its proportions, and the eye wandered over those snowy peaks far away into the Tyrol. On the left the Ettaler Mannl came peeping from amid the verdure-covered rocks. My good friend Franz Kobell has sung his stern virtues; but I was now hungry, and so tormented with thirst that I cared not one farthing about his virtues or anything else,—*I wanted to drink*. Water was not to be had; I was obliged therefore to mix some snow with a few drops of rum and eat it. Neuner told me snow would only make me more thirsty, but that I could not help,—

drink I must. We ate a crust of bread, and, as the sun was shining warmly, we crept into a shady place, with Bursch beside us, and all three had a sound sleep.

In an hour we awoke, and on we went again. "A buck! a buck!" flew suddenly from Neuner's lips; and with widely-opened eyes and his mouth screwed up as though he were saying "Hush!" though he uttered not a breath, down he dropped, so as to prevent his body being seen above the sky-line. We crept forward on our stomachs, with hats off, gently advancing our heads, till at last our eyes could just peep over the ridge. There he was below us, and a splendid fellow too.

"He is quite black," I whispered to Neuner; "that's a good buck indeed! But how can we get near him?"

This was a question of painful interest. To be tortured by the sight of such a capital chamois, within my grasp as it were, and yet not be able to approach him, was most distressing; for in a moment my eye reconnoitred the ground, and I saw all the difficulties of our position. Over the ridge where we lay the descent was nearly perpendicular; latschen were growing there abundantly, it is true, so that to climb down would have been possible enough, but not noiselessly, and that was here a question of the last importance. From out the depth before us, that went stretching away more or less abruptly to the valley, rose here and there a pile of rock like the towers of a cathedral, with latschen growing on its surface, or

starting from the gaps and crevices. It was on the top of one of these rocks the buck was feeding. With our glasses we looked down full upon his broad back.

"What a magnificent fellow! If we could but get him, Neuner!" I said, half inquiringly.

"Yes," he answered, "but how? that 's the thing."

At first he was partly hidden among the latschen, then his hind-quarters, quite black, emerged from the dark green bushes, as he slowly moved on, perfectly unconscious of our neighbourhood.

"I don't see him now," said Neuner.

"But I do: look there, the black spot to the right of that bare rock,—that 's he! Here, take my glass."

"Ah, what a size! Well, we had better go down yonder to the left, and look if there is any possibility of getting nearer: it will however be a long shot in any case. Shall we try?"

"Yes, of course, come along."

And we went to where the ridge dipped somewhat, but yet advanced thitherwards where the chamois stood. Now came the latschen,—those dreadful latschen through whose thick branches it is so difficult to creep without a rustling noise. We stepped with breathless caution. "Hush!" said Neuner with a long drawn-out breath; "Hush—sh—sh!—silently, silently! no noise, for heaven's sake!" And holding back the stubborn branches for each other, we proceeded slowly to the brink. Before us was a wilderness of latschen, growing up from the abrupt steep, and there was a deep hollow between the brink where

I stood and the tower-like rock where the chamois was first seen. But now we looked and we saw him not. Between us and the rock on which my every hope was centered there rose another, hiding a part of the first from view. I fancied the buck might be just behind that rock, and whispered it to Neuner. "If so," I said, "he will for certain come in sight again on one side of it or the other;" for the nearer crag, being less broad than the further one, hid just the middle part from our sight.

"How far is it from here to yonder bare rock on the left?" I asked; "it is there I expect he will come."

"A hundred and forty yards; not more I think, but quite as much certainly."

For a long long time we waited, but in vain. At last Neuner proposed to return to the ridge whence we first saw the buck, and look if he was still there. After awhile I saw him standing motionless on the crest of the mountain, and gazing steadily into the depth below. He made a sign that nothing more was to be seen. This was certainly not cheering, but I did not yet despond, and still believed the chamois was on the rock and would eventually move into sight. But another half hour dragged by, and then another, and at last I reluctantly acknowledged to myself that I gave him up. But as Neuner still stood on high peering forth from his eyrie, I would not quit my station, incommodious as it was to stand between, and partly upon, the branches of the latschen. And

though in my heart I had given up all hope now, my eyes were still fixed on the further rock; when behold! from behind the nearer one the head of a chamois appears—only the head—as he advances grazing. It was on the right. And now he lifts his head, and comes forward. His whole body is exposed; one second only, and the report of my rifle thunders through the mountains. He stops, turns, and goes to the very spot where I expected he would come first. It is terribly steep just there; he stands somewhat bent together, ready to descend the rock's precipitous side. But he is hesitating. He must be hit! The rifle is still at my shoulder, and the ball from the left barrel . . . "By Jove, it has hit him!" Down he comes; he can't stop himself, he rolls headlong over the crag! I watched him till he was out of sight, and then drew a long deep breath. I looked up to Neuner, and taking off my hat waved it in the air, that he might know all was right. He swung his gaily in return, and dashing along through the latschen was soon at my side.

"Did you see him fall, Neuner?"

"Yes, but before you fired I saw nothing. When you levelled your rifle I thought it was only a joke, till the shot came, and afterwards the other."

To be doubly sure, I looked across with my glass, to see if any blood was upon the rock, but I could discover none. Then came the doubts and anxiety; yet at the same time I felt sure he was hit, and well hit too. With some difficulty we clambered down to the

Comp.v.Th.Horschelt Gedr.im.J.B.Kuhn's Lith.Anstalt,München. Lith.v.F.Hohe.

foot of the rock; I looked into the gulf, but could see no trace of the animal.

"He *must be* in there, Neuner,—I am sure he must. No chamois that was not badly wounded ever came down a rock as he did. I 'll go down and look after him."

"No, you will not be able to get out again; it is impossible. Let us go lower down yonder, and look up the gully."

We did so, and I stopped to load my rifle. Neuner meanwhile ran forwards to a projecting crag, and by his manner and the expression of his whole body I knew he saw the chamois. At the same moment he fired.

"There he is!" he cried; "he 's limping."

"Stop, Neuner, I am sure he can't go far; we shall overtake him, and then we 'll let Bursch follow, and he 'll bring him to bay." And down we ran, where at any other time we should have gone with slow and careful steps, and presently caught sight of him.

"There he is!"

"Let me fire!" I cried; "do you see him? Ah, now I do, but the latschen half hides him. Now he moves forward!" Fire!—and down he rolls head over heels. Bursch, who till now, though trembling in every limb with excitement, had restrained his desperate longing, was unable to do so any longer. When the chamois fell, he dashed forwards, baying, screaming almost with passionate delight, and the chamois and he were going down the steep together, and we

following as fast as we could go; it was a headlong race over loose stones of every size, slipping, stumbling, falling, and then sliding forwards several yards with the loose rubble, my feet in front and my body inclined backwards, leaning on my pole behind. Now all was silent; Bursch had ceased his baying, so we knew the chamois was dead. On the grass and rocks were frequent stains of blood: but as we could not see where the hound was, we whistled for him, and at the same moment descried him beside the buck, which had fallen close to the trunk of a half-decayed tree.

Then came the examination of our booty, and of the different shots. One of the horns was gone, broken short off close to the skull in rolling among the rocks after the last shot. I was sorry, for they were high and thick, and had in perfection that short curve peculiar to the buck, which gives him so sturdy an air.

"Look, Neuner, here's the first shot; it has grazed his back-bone badly—a little too high, though. No wonder he stood so bent together after being hit!"

"And this must be the second," said Neuner, examining another just behind the shoulder. "It was that prevented his being able to hold himself up in coming down the rocks."

"Well, I am very satisfied with both: that left barrel of mine shoots capitally. Now then, let us pull him out:—how heavy he is!"

And dragging him to a spot where it was less steep, I gralloched him, and found him in capital condition and as fat as possible.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOMEWARDS.

Not far from where the chamois fell there gurgled a rivulet; and when our buck was put into the rücksack, we sat down beside the pleasant water, and mixing a cupful with a little rum drank success to the merry sport. Not that I was thirsty now, for the excitement of the last two or three hours had prevented my thinking about it; yet, thirsty or not, it was right cheerful to sit on a mossy stone, rifle in lap, with a good chamois to feast our eyes on, and to taste the delicious water that was playing round the stones. But there was no time for luxuriating thus.

"We must be going," said Neuner, "for it is a good way home; and if we wait much longer night will overtake us before we reach the village."

"Let me carry it," I said, as Neuner was about to sling his rücksack, with the chamois in it, on his shoulders; "I would rather, I assure you,—half-way at least."

"Oh no, it is nothing; I have many a time carried two roe-bucks, and have still gone on stalking, as though I had nothing. Two I did not feel,—I did not mind them at all. I have even done so with three, and have carried home five. Sixty, eighty pounds, I don't mind now, but more I should not much like.

"Yet that's a pretty fair weight to carry a long time."

"Yes, but I am not what I once was: formerly I cared for nothing;—heat, or cold, or hunger, it made little difference to me. I used to be out day after day, and night after night, and did not return home from one week's end to the other. But once I went out, and in the evening, on reaching the hut where I intended to sleep, found it full of snow; so I could make no fire. I was in a profuse sweat, and of course had nothing to put over me; I got some brushwood and made a bed on the snow, and lay down. The next morning I felt ill, and went home; but I was so cold and stiff that it took me a whole day to get there. I have never been quite well since."

There were no signs of stiffness in his limbs now, for on he went at a smart pace, despite the rough path and the chamois at his back; and let me tell you, dear Reader, a good buck hangs at your shoulders with a very considerable dead weight.

In coming down a mountain, there is every now and then some appearance which gives indication of your approach to the valley; and each one, as it shows you are nearing your home, is welcome and makes you

glad. We came to a meadow affording capital pasturage, and strewn over it were the rude log-huts for storing the hay*.

"Often enough at evening," observed Neuner, as we stopped a moment or two for him to rest his load, "often enough were stags to be seen here formerly. The meadow, you see, is quite surrounded by the woods, and as the sun was going down they liked to come forth and graze."

"In Suabia too, where I have often been out stag-shooting, it was the same. At Nietheim, not far from Neresheim and Castle Taxis, there are magnificent beech-woods; and you might be sure of meeting five, six, seven, or eight good stags about there in an afternoon, grazing at one time under the trees. But not a single deer is there now; the woods are empty, their inhabitants gone."

"Once, near Ettal, my brother saw twenty stags all together in a pool," said Neuner. "He is forester in that district, you know. It was in summer, when the great horse-fly is very troublesome to them. Another time he met seventeen together. That was a scene—such pushing, and rolling and fighting with each other!"

"It must have been worth seeing," I observed. "What a splashing, and how they must have been coated with mud!"

* After the hay-making the whole crop is put up in such log-huts, and when winter comes and the snow is hard enough to bear, the hay is piled on sledges and carried down to the village.

"Bauer shot one there the other day,—just there, between yonder woods, where you see a way cut through them," said Neuner, pointing to a grassy avenue leading from the smooth green meadow away into the forest. "Game would quickly be here, if there was only a little peace. The red-deer, that used to quit their haunts at certain seasons, now stay and drop their young here; and in the rutting season the stags have their appointed places too. For some years this has been the case; formerly they never did so. With a little quiet, I should soon have a fair stock again, for all the places about here are favourable for deer and chamois; they can maintain themselves on the mountains, and there are sheltered spots for them in winter, just such places as they like. And you see how beautifully all is connected, how all adjoins and hangs together: I would not wish a finer forest, and it used to be my greatest delight; but now, I don't know how it is, all my pleasure is at an end."

"But things will change," I said; "be sure matters cannot go on as they are now,—they must mend."

"Oh, you can form no idea of the endless disagreeables we have to go through. There are our master's rights to defend; and if we do so, never so mildly, then the peasants, every one of them, abuse us in all possible ways. They think now they have a *right* to everything: they want wood given them, or permission to collect litter* for their stables, and are greatly

* The peasantry in Germany collect the dead leaves in the forests to make litter for their cattle in the stables in winter. Though of

discontented if they do not immediately get what they require. And yet these are the persons who have been exterminating the game, and would not listen to reason, and who refused every offer made them that was just and fair. No, I 've enough of it; my duties give me no pleasure now."

"I well know what the peasants are; formerly I thought something might be done with them, but I now see it is quite out of the question. Besides, of the game here they had no reason to complain, for it did them no harm, as is the case in the flat land.*"

course the forester does not mind their carrying them away, he cannot give to each one indiscriminately permission to do so. Formerly, when there were red-deer in the forests, the constant invasion of their solitude disturbed them; for, as everybody knows, there is nothing the deer value so much as quiet. Besides, the young wood might be injured, or timber stolen, if every one were allowed to work for days together in the woods merely for the asking.

* In the flat land the game, it is true, often did harm to the crops of the husbandman. But when the damage was paid for—paid for even beyond its value—the discontent of the peasant did not cease, though many of them calculated on this indemnity as one source of revenue. I have often seen potatoes planted on strips of ground on the skirts of the forest, which no peasant would ever have thought of tilling, had he not hoped to be able to show that deer had been on his field, and so make a claim for loss sustained. The noble proprietor of the forests bordering the Danube, in the neighbourhood of Donau Stauf, paid regularly every year a considerable sum to the peasants as indemnity for the damage done to their crops by the game; and according as the price of corn rose these sums were increased. As the money received was generally more than adequate to the loss sustained, the peasantry were satisfied, and found in the arrangement no cause of complaint; when suddenly, in 1848, although the preceding years the indemnity received by them had been nearly doubled, they discovered that such a state of things could exist no longer; and thus, supreme authority ceding to popular will, a general extermination of game took place throughout the land. Now how-

"To be sure not," continued my companion; "but even my woods, which I always took such pleasure in, they can't leave alone."

"What is it they do?" I enquired.

"Did you not see, as we were going up the mountain this morning, the bark peeled off several trees? Well, where the bark is off, a worm enters and destroys the tree. I could show you places where there are twenty or thirty in that state. The worst is, the disease is infectious; and when one tree has been treated so, it is sure to spread to several others. I think I should shoot a fellow if I caught him at it."

"But what is their motive?"

"Malice, mischief, ill-will," he answered. "What other motive could they have, as they gain nothing by it? And yet they want us to help them out with wood, etc., and are mightily surprised and insolent if we say a word. My trees used to be my great delight; for as to shooting the game, I don't care about that: it never cost me an effort to see a stag or a chamois and not to fire at it."

"And what is the price of venison?" I asked.

"Eight kreutzers a pound*. We are obliged to sell it cheap, or we should not dispose of it at all. If we

ever, when too late, there is hardly one who does not regret the change, and wish that "the good old times" would come again; for to many a peasant this indemnity was a source of revenue:—it was a part of his income in fact, and, as such, entered into all his calculations.

* One-third of a penny less than threepence. Nine kreutzers are equal to threepence.

asked more than the poachers, no one would take it, so we are obliged to give it at the same price as they."

Rather hard this, for another to be underselling you with your own property!

"Have any been out lately?" I asked.

"Of course: why they are always out: it was not long ago Bauer met three men on the Enning, where you shot your buck today,—close by where we first saw him."

"As he dared not fire, he could not do much I suppose."

"He took away the rifle of one,—that was all. The thing was, he stalked close up to the man without his perceiving him, and laid hold of his rifle. The fellow, who was sitting on a rock, was terribly startled, and slipped forward to get away: Bauer caught hold of his rifle, and thought to get the man too, but he just escaped."

"And the others," I said, "what did they do?"

"You see, when Bauer crept up to the one poacher he did not know any others were there. He had not observed them, for they were a little distance off. But when he did, he had his rifle to his shoulder in a moment, so they could do nothing but follow their companion, and off they ran."

We now came in sight of the village and its little homesteads, and broad fresh green pastures; with here and there a peasant-girl tripping along on the dewy path, returning from Partenkirchen, or youth whistling gaily, or with a mouth-harmonicon feasting

his soul with music, as he lingered abstractedly on his way.

And now we are in the village, and the children stop in their play, and the old people and youths and lasses pause in their work as we pass, and look at the good chamois that Neuner has at his back. And with what feeling of inner satisfaction and delight you meet the passers-by! in truth you are glad they happen to come that way just then, when the rücksack is freshly stained and bulging out with its pleasant load. You feel so cheery and light-hearted, so perfectly satisfied with yourself, and, even if not so generally, I am quite sure that *now* you cannot help being affable. But does not success always make us happy?

We took the buck to Neuner's cottage, and his sister stepped out to welcome us. Now came the sweet words of gratulation,—sweet and gentle-sounding ever, be the language what it may in which they are spoken. Some of the hair was then pulled out to make a *gemsbart;* it was jet black, but unfortunately rather short. Six weeks later it would have waved the whole length of his back in long and splendid tufts. He weighed, when cleaned, 61½ lb., and of fat alone we took 5 lb out of him.

"There are calamities in authorship which only authors know," writes Charles Lamb to a friend; and just so with the sportsman—there is many a circumstance which he only can appreciate. All these little incidents therefore I mention purposely; for, though very trifling in themselves, they belong here, and it is

such after all that contribute in no small degree to make up the sum of the pleasures of the chase. Just as the place where you follow the game, or the spot where it falls, serves to enhance your delight, so the length and colour of the beard*, the size or beauty of the horns, the casual meeting with some forester or friend as you are going downward with your prize over your shoulders,—all these and a thousand other chance events contribute to your pleasure, and swell the amount of your enjoyment.

We were told that two shots had been heard on the Oester Berg, the mountain that rises immediately behind Farchant. It was probably Bauer, the under-gamekeeper; for he had gone out betimes that morning, and was not yet returned. Nor did he come later. We supposed therefore that he had wounded a roe-buck or a chamois, and would stay that night on the mountain.

As I returned to my little inn, the whole village was crowded with young heifers coming back from the pasturage, each wearing round its neck a differently toned bell; and there was something very cheerful, and far from discordant, in the sound. Hardly had it ceased, when the evening bell, swinging slow and steadily, again broke the silence, but added to the repose,—reminding all, even the lonely wood-cutter in his poor hut high up on the mountain, that it were well to thank God for another day of life.

* The so-called "beard," be it remembered, is the hair growing along the ridge of the back.

THE ETTALER MANNL.

"The Ettaler Mannl," or "The Little Man of Ettal," alluded to in the preceding pages, is a mountain that closes in the vale of Ettal, and whose top consists of an upright bare rock, which rises above the surrounding verdure, forming by contrast a rather conspicuous feature in the landscape. This "Man" Kobell in a little poem has invested with human attributes, and makes him from his watch-tower look forth over the the plain, to see if danger is approaching the land. When I was last at Ettal it was with Kobell, and the villagers told him that the words had been set to music, and how a few nights before they had sung them amid loud cheers and enthusiastic applause. The dalesmen love their mountain all the more dearly now; they have identified themselves with "The Old Man of Ettal," since the poet has breathed upon him and made him live.

The Ettaler Mannl.

The Ettaler Mannl is strong and stout,
His bones have a marrow of stone throughout;
Cares not for wind or for tempest wild,
For he 's indeed a true mountain child.

The Ettaler Mannl sees far inland,
'Tis a fine look-out where he 's ta'en his stand;
But what 's he watching, what is 't he will,
So earnest always, and always still?

I 'll tell you what,—he 's thinking, and heeds
What sort of life the Bavarian leads;
If still, as once, he is kind and good,
If still he 's warm'd by the same brave blood,

If still to his King he true be found,
That 's why the old fellow looks round and round;
And should it not be so, then—God speed!
For days would follow of sorest need.

The Ettaler Mannl in awful size,
His gray cloak round him, doth now arise;
A giant then you will find is he,
The like of whom none did ever see.

And with his feet and his arms of stone,
Makes such wild havoc as ne'er was known,
And on throughout the whole land the same,
Till clean once more from disgrace and shame.

The Ettaler Mannl still stands in peace,
All 's right as yet—there is nought amiss;
So go on bravely, be good and true,
That this Man never have aught to do.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE OESTER BERG.

At noon I started for Partenkirchen, and walked straight to the forester's house to report myself. He was not a little surprised at my good fortune. Then, before going up the Oester Berg where Neuner had seen two chamois lately, I went to the inn to get some bread, a few lumps of sugar, in case I should wish to make a glass of grog, and a couple of eggs for mixing with my *schmarren*. The landlord's daughter—who, although her wedding was near at hand and she was busied the live-long day with three of her hand-maids in marking, and hemming, and folding great piles of linen for the household of which she was soon to be mistress, was not always in the best of moods, —met me as I entered. "Good day, Christina!" I said; "why, I expected a friendly greeting,—you wanted a chamois, and I sent you one yesterday."

"Ah, good day!" she answered: "one hardly knows you in your green hunter's hat and joppe."

"The chamois was good, was it?"

"A capital one,—who shot it?"

"I."

"No, no! that I don't believe."

"Now for your unbelief, Christina, you must give me an apple to take with me; for I am going up the Oester Berg, and dry bread makes a rather insipid meal. So now for the punishment: come along to the storeroom and put some of your best into my rücksack, for part with your rosy apples you must."

What a storeroom that was! well worthy of belonging to the richest man in the village, and a postmaster and landlord withal. It was a large stone-paved room, light and cheerful and cool; and round the walls were bright copper moulds, for making jellies and cakes; and a store of spoons, and plates, and jolly-looking tankards, with huge flagons beside them, that had many a time descended into the earth, and returned thence foaming and sparkling and bright with the rich treasures laid up there. And there were mighty stone bottles standing on the dresser, in which it was evident some rebellious spirit was enthralled, for to make egress quite impossible the corks were bound firmly down; and mountains of butter on fair white boards, and eggs in abundance; and binns broad and deep, filled with coarse meal, and finer, and the very finest flour. Loaves of freshly-baked brown bread were piled on the shelves, each a good five-pounder; and tongues shrivelled and smoked, with fat sides of bacon, hung from a row of hooks;

and sugar-loaves, and dried fruits, and glass jars filled with luscious syrups and preserves; golden apricots and red cranberries, with pots of lucent Tyrolian honey —all was there in generous overflowing abundance. The fat of the land, dropping into many channels, had been made to pour out its unctuous richness here. It was worth seeing, that storeroom,—a rich granary where the wealth of the earth was garnered up!

A good road leads a considerable distance up the mountain: at last, between the hills a green valley is seen, with a single solitary hut. But it was to the "Hinteren Hütte"—the hindmost hut—that I had to go; so crossing the meadow and following a stony path, I soon saw smoke rising slowly, and mixing with the mists which were gathering fast over the landscape. It was growing dark, for I had tarried too long at Partenkirchen, and the walk thence had taken me two good hours.

I pushed open the unbolted door, and entered the room on my right.

"Ha! you are come at last," said Neuner, rising to meet me; "it is so late we had given you up."

"And glad I am to be here," I said; "it is just beginning to rain. I fear we shall have bad weather; the sky is overcast, and the clouds look very gloomy."

"Should it rain in the night so much the better, if it is but fine in the morning. After rain the chamois are on the mountain-tops. We want rain, for it has long been too dry, and the chamois have kept low down."

I wiped the moisture from my rifle, and hung it up against the wall; and laying aside my rücksack and thick shoes, was comfortable enough in the warm room. The hut was rather a large one. It consisted of the room where all sat, with a smaller one adjoining; and on the other side was a kitchen,—that is to say, a smoke-blackened place three or four yards long by one-and-a-half or two in breadth, paved with rough stones, and a rudely-raised hearth in the middle for making fire. On the wall hung several large copper saucepans for warming milk, and an iron frying-pan, and this was all the furniture. But nothing could be cleaner than these utensils; they were as bright inside as if they had been of silver. On entering the house-door you went along a passage, leading to a shed or sort of barn, which, though roofed over, was at one end quite open to the weather. Here stood a large horse-trough, into which a rivulet splashed and gurgled unceasingly. At the further part of the shed was the cow-house, and over this stable, immediately beneath the roof, was the loft, crammed quite full with hay. Here I was to sleep that night, and many a following one. You scrambled up to it, by help of a rude ladder; and unless the pattering of the large rain-drops on the shingle roof just above your forehead were to disturb your rest, or the jingling of the cows' bells in the stable beneath, or the noisy rustle of the water falling into the trough,—sounds which most likely you would not be accustomed to in your bedroom in town,—if, I say, the novelty of all this did not keep you from

sleeping, you might pass as comfortable and warm a night up there *in*, not *on*, the sweet hay, as in the best chamber of the Clarendon.

In the room where we sat was the usual large stove, and round it ran a bench, as well as along the walls. There was one deal chair besides, and a deal table, a clock, and a closet where the pans of milk were placed, that the warmth might the more quickly cause the cream to form in thick and luscious layers*.

As it was late in the season the greater part of the cows were gone into the valley, and with them "the Swiss," or chief dairyman. The calves only were left behind for some weeks longer, with cows sufficient to furnish milk for them, and to make butter for the three herdsmen who were still here. These had to tend the cattle, cart the manure, and keep all in order. The elder man, under whose orders the others were, cooked for them, skimmed the milk, made the butter, and managed all relating to their frugal housekeeping. They lived on bread and milk and butter. Their complexions, clear and bright as possible, gave evidence of perfect health; and many a lady might have envied their transparent purity. Health shone from the men's eyes: the lids were thin, and moulded them-

* I here saw a method of skimming milk that was new to me. The dairyman took out a pan of milk, and passing his finger round the surface, separated, as it were, the edge of the thick layer of cream from the sides of the vessel; then tilting up the pan, as if to pour out the contents, and blowing the surface, it floated off, and tumbled, almost in one piece, into the bowl put to receive it.

selves to the ball of the eye, causing but the softest outline.

The younger of the three, a lad of about sixteen, was sitting at the table playing at some nondescript game of cards with two women who had been on the mountains collecting gentian-roots*, and who had come in to claim shelter for the night. The pale flickering lamp gave a poor light, it is true, but the youth's hearty laugh every now and then, at his own good luck or scientific play, made the place cheerful. It was a singular group; he on one side, his arms and neck bare, and wild as a young colt, watching with an arch expression for his adversary to fling down her card, and one girl looking over the other's shoulder into her hand, and giving her friend sage counsel.

A pan of milk had been put before me on my arrival, part of which I had drunk. The herdsman now asked me what I would have for supper, so giving him the eggs I begged he would make me a schmarren. He soon brought it in a large earthen pan, hot and brown, and just savouring of the apple which had been sliced into it. The young forester who had come with Neuner shared it with me, alternately taking a spoonful of schmarren out of my pan, and a spoonful of fresh milk from another beside him. I preferred a draught of water, a pitcher full of which "the boy," as he was

* These are collected in great quantities, and sold for the purpose of distillation. The spirit obtained from them is in high repute: I think it detestable.

called, fetched from the spring and put upon the table before me. It was all very primitive, both the service and the repast,—much, I imagine, like what might be met with in a lonely log-hut in the backwoods of America, where the wilderness stretches away towards the far west. But the service was rendered willingly, and though "the boy" was bare-footed and bare-knee'd, and had on but two articles of clothing, a thick shirt and a pair of short breeches, there was nothing of coarseness or vulgarity about him. Nature—simple, God-fashioned Nature—had been, to him, as a mother, and she had reared him in her own quiet way and very unartificially, giving him no polish, for she had herself none to give; but she had moulded his heart kindly, and his manner was fashioned after the simple human feelings which had taken root there, though of forms he indeed knew nothing. For him the maternal converse had done all.

It was too early to go to my hay; and though the herdsmen looked sleepy, and evidently thought we were keeping recklessly late hours—it was at most eight o'clock—I stayed where I was, and chatted with Neuner about the chase, the mountains, and his favourite forests.

"Have you shot many chamois this year, Neuner?" I asked.

"No, I have shot nothing, but Bauer has—twelve chamois and six roebucks."

"And in the Ammergau—do you know how many they got this year? A good number I suppose: as it

is preserved for the King there must be plenty of game there."

"Forty chamois have been shot; but as to the stags it is quite a riddle where all the good ones have gone. Hardly a single good hart has been seen this year."

As we talked, one or the other of us mentioned the Zug Spitz, and this reminded me I had long wanted to get some information about the ascent, which was difficult, and had been accomplished for the first time only a few years before*.

"It is about five hours' walk from Partenkirchen to the place where you commence the ascent," Neuner told me, in answer to my questions; "but it is too late in the year to attempt it now. A cow-herd there, who is a sort of guide, has been up twice. 'T is a wild place at the top!"

"What, have you been there?" I asked.

"Yes, I went up with the head forester and several others. There are only two places which are ugly and difficult; one is a narrow ridge, a sort of bridge, which you have to cross, with a precipice straight down on both sides of you three-quarters of an hour deep†. It is very horrible, there 's no denying that; all looks so wild, and rent, and torn. If you like you may ride across astride."

"Did you do so?"

* It is very little less than 11,000 feet high.

† In Germany it is usual to compute thus *by time*, meaning in this instance it would take three-quarters of an hour to arrive at the bottom.

"No, I walked over: that I did not mind at all. But the other place, near the top, is much worse: it is a steep slope of ice; we were obliged to cut steps with a hatchet all the way, and got on well enough. But the coming down is the worst, for if you slip there 's an end of you."

"And no accident happened?" I asked.

"No, all went on well; however we were obliged to leave some of the party behind, one at the ridge and three at the ice: they would not venture, and waited till we came back. Luckily we had a very fine day; the snow was quite hard in the morning, but later it grew much softer."

"But, Neuner, the other day when I was at the Ammergau, I heard that an idiot who wanders about there had been up and alone; is it true?"

"Yes, quite true: he has always had a passion for ascending mountains, and sometimes he goes up one, sometimes another. Once he came home and told everybody he had been on the Zug Spitz. They all laughed at him of course, for no one believed it. This, it seems, hurt the poor fellow very much; so off he set, and after being absent several days, came home again and told the people he had been up the Zug Spitz, and that if they looked they would see a pole at the top. No one believed the tale now more than before; yet when they looked with their glasses, there sure enough was the pole stuck on the very highest point."

"Yes," I said, "I have seen the pole: but how get

it up there? And then, to find his way quite alone! Why, it's almost incredible."

"But quite true," replied Neuner, "for there was no pole there before; besides he described everything exactly as it is. The most extraordinary part of the story is that he went up barefoot,—the second time at least, and the time before he slept on the mountain. That he was not frozen to death is quite a miracle."

"Did he tell where he got the pole, and how he managed to carry it?"

"Oh yes," said Neuner, "we know about that. The pole is a young fir: this he felled as far up the mountain as possible, and then dragged after him all the rest of the way. Once he let it slip, and down it rolled a considerable distance; but he returned, and dragged it up again. And only think! the poor fellow had nothing to eat all the time, for he merely took a *kreutzer-semmel* (a penny roll) with him, which dropped on the ice, and rolled away into some crevice or hollow. Since then he has been on the Spitz Berg —the only person, I believe, who ever was there; and he says it is so frightful that he will never go again, but the Zug Spitz he does not mind attempting. He has been on the Wetter Stein too, and on nearly all the peaks you see of that range."

The gentian-gatherers had been gone some time, the neatherd had been lying asleep on the bench beside the stove since he had cooked my supper, and I began to think it would be as well to turn into my

resting-place. The peasants stood up, the elder one said a prayer, which the others repeated aloud after him, and then all knelt to say the Lord's Prayer. Wishing me good-night they went up a ladder behind the stove, and disappeared through a trap-door, their beds being above the room where we had been staying. Neuner preferred lying down on a bench in the warmth. Being unacquainted with the locality, the young forester went before me with a lantern, and we thus proceeded to the shed and up the shaky ladder to our dormitory. The loft was nearly filled to the roof with hay. We stepped and tumbled along over the fragrant heaps, and, aided by the dim light, I soon made myself a right cozy nest. I pulled down great masses of hay from the pile beside me, and my companion flung whole armfulls over my body. Except my head, which rested on a cloth thrown over the hay-pillow—I owed the luxury of the cloth, by the bye, to the thoughtfulness of the neatherd—not an inch of me was to be seen. I was as warm as possible.

"Why, there are the two women!" exclaimed the young forester in surprise, holding up his lantern. They were lying close to us, but like myself so tucked up we had not observed them.

"No matter," I said, "as long as they do not snore: that is all I care about. Good night!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

MIST ON THE MOUNTAIN.

I AWOKE early the next morning, and groping my way clambered down the ladder. It was three o'clock, and as dark as pitch; and the gusts of cold damp air came creeping round my bare knees, which just before had been imbedded so warmly. Outside there was a drizzling rain, and mist, and impenetrable blackness; in short, to tell the honest truth, it looked miserably wretched. With such weather there was little prospect of success, and with—I don't know if it was a sigh, a groan, or a growl of discontent—I drew back my gloomy face, and went into the room to lace on my shoes. This done we took our rifles and started.

Most persons, doubtless, have walked out in a dark night; but if they have only done so on a tolerably smooth road, they will have but an imperfect notion of the unpleasantness attending every single step when the path is strewn with large stones, loose fragments of rock, broken up into holes or intersected by

rivulets. You do not see where you are stepping, and thus often plant your foot so as to slip down a bank and let the water fill your shoes brimmingly. This however does not much matter, it is true, for it soon bubbles out again; but in going up a steep and slippery mountain it is fatiguing, hindersome, and even dangerous to find yourself stumbling over unseen obstructions, or your nailed shoes sliding from under you down a slanting surface of stone. The angle up which you are going being pretty acute, down you come on such occasions on both hands, and, what is far more annoying than having your knees driven into the earth or among the stones, your rifle flies round your shoulder and descends with no little force upon the ground. This always went far to put me in a passion. On such occasions my first thought was my rifle; and if unable to see, I would feel, if all was in order.

We went up in a straight line for some time; at last Neuner said we should soon have better ground. We could now just see black patches, like blots, through the gloom, and soon these grew into distincter outlines, becoming trees and latschen. There was a rude path in the neighbourhood that led to the summit, but how discover the exact spot? Amid stunted bushes, looking one like another, and patches of torn-up rock, and gravel, and stones, it was difficult in the dusk to find the place.

"Yonder is the dead tree," said Neuner, "and the path is to the right, a little higher up."

"I think it is nearer the tree than where we are,"

answered the other, "and near thick clumps of latschen. Wait a moment," he added to me, "I 'll go straight on, and do you, Neuner, keep the right. We shall soon find it."

Presently a whistle told me the path was found, and going straight toward the sound, we all three proceeded one behind the other. As we neared the summit, the grey rock and snow appeared through the dun clouds, and below us mists were floating, which shut out the living world from view.

The north side of the mountain, as is always the case, wore a totally different aspect. The line of the ridge was the boundary of two distinct regions. From the summit we now looked down upon sharp points; all was broken and wilder in character than on the side where we had mounted. We went downwards, and wound along the slanting face of the rock; here and there stepping along a mere ledge, formed by a projecting layer of stone, our bodies slanting outwards toward the rocks and away from the precipice*. And now we mounted again, and reached the top of Henneneck. The vapours had before partially cleared away, but they now swept by beneath our feet, and we looked down on cloud, on dimness, and uncertainty. Close to us, a yard or so downwards, the traces of chamois were discernible in the snow; but they were old—some days old perhaps.

* The clouds were just below our feet, so that it was impossible to see beyond; but for this circumstance, it might have been less pleasant to walk along that ledge.

Beyond lay a world of shadows, where no eye could penetrate. Suddenly the forester exclaimed, "There 's a chamois!" I saw nothing; but a moment after from out the mist and cloud came the sound of a rolling stone, and as we listened we heard it bounding on till at last it was no longer audible.

We found but one new track of game in the snow, the others were all old. The place seemed forsaken. We still went on, and, creeping up a shoulder of the mountain, looked over into a hollow spread with verdure—for the mists had sailed away just then—in the sure hope of seeing some animal life; but our eyes swept over every inch of ground in vain.

It was now six o'clock, and I was glad to breakfast. A slice of brown bread and one of Christina's apples furnished the meal. I relished it much, for I was very hungry. Before us rose the Bishop, a mountain of grey rock, on this side almost entirely covered with snow.

"Was that a good place for chamois formerly?" I asked.

"No, never," replied Neuner; "but further down was one of their favourite haunts. Yonder runs the boundary-line which divides the chase belonging to the Eschenlohe peasants from that of the King. They come across, and leave the game no rest: you may hear shots cracking, all the year round; in season or out of season, it is quite the same to them. Here we shoot the does too, because if *we* did not, *they* would; so, you see, we are ourselves obliged to clear

these mountains of the game; indeed all along the boundary we are forced to destroy it."

On such a day as this it is impossible to calculate with any certainty upon a favourable change in the weather. The appearances around vary from one moment to another. Suddenly the mists come trailing by, and bits of floating cloud, smoke-like and vapoury; and in a second all is shut out from your sight. A damp, cold, dull clogginess, like thickened air, hangs before your face; you feel it sticking to you; and to see your comrade beyond two paces' distance is impossible. Even then he looms towering through the fog, an indistinct spectral shape. Every landmark has disappeared; there is not one single thing for the eye to seize and hold by, and this soon produces a disquieting sensation. All stability seems gone, and your nature is not used to this. Then you discover that the eye, as well as the footstep, needs firm ground to move over; *it must have something to lay hold of*, and it peers around with a straining intensity into the sluggish, thick vacuity, but finds nothing.

It soon began to rain, and so heavily that we resolved to descend. On our slippery way down we found here and there the genuine Iceland moss. At last we reached a hollow, where the hut of a woodcutter was standing, and, rude as it was, it proved a welcome shelter. We were all wet to the skin. The younger forester took off his joppe, and wrung the water from his shirt-sleeves: he complained of being cold; however I did not feel so, and lying down on

the bed of dry leaves, with my face toward the open door, watched the mist and rain so long that at last I fell asleep. After the rain it grew somewhat clearer, and in going along we could see down into a green valley.

"Once upon a time five good stags were there," said Neuner, pointing to the glen.

"It was hereabout that Bauer shot his stag, was it not?" asked the other.

"Yes, just there, near yonder steep bank."

"And who shot the others?" I asked.

"Oh, poachers no doubt," said Neuner, "for they soon disappeared. Perhaps they were scared away and shot somewhere else; however *we* saw none of them."

"And did you never meet any of the men when you have been out on the mountain?"

"No; and had I caught one and brought him to the police, it is a hundred to one that he would have been punished."

"There was a keeper at Schlier See—Bromberger was his name—he once met a whole band of poachers, and among them was a notorious rascal; he therefore thought it better not to lose so good an opportunity, but to make sure of him, and, picking him out from the rest, sent a bullet through his body."

"That was in the old times perhaps. It was by far the best way. The poachers expected nothing else: they risked their lives, and we risked ours; they knew beforehand that should we happen to meet

one of them, he was a dead man, and in some places they treated us in the same manner. As I said, both parties expected nothing else: neither complained; and if such a poacher got a full charge of swan-shot in his body when one of us caught him carrying off a roebuck or a chamois, he never laid a complaint or said a word about the matter, knowing very well he ought not to have been there,—that it was his own fault, and that he deserved the punishment. He was aware of what he risked before he went out; but as he could not gratify his passion without the danger, why, he was content to take the venture as he found it."

"But what was the story of Bromberger?" asked the younger forester.

"Why," said I, "the thing happened thus:—a friend of mine, young Count D * * *, who was with Bromberger at the time, has often told me the story. They were out together, looking for chamois: while sitting on the mountain and peering around, they suddenly perceived several men below the ridge, a good distance off, and, like themselves, watching for game. Their glasses were out in a moment, and one of the band was recognized as a noted poacher of the name of Hofer. At the sight of him the keeper's blood began to flow quicker, for this fellow was known as the most daring in the whole neighbourhood, and the blood of more than one forester was on his head. Solacher had fired at him once, but missed. Bromberger waited to see what they would do. After a time

the men rose and came along a path leading to the ridge where the two were sitting. The whole band presently emerged from the hollow, and stood exposed on the summit of the mountain, with Hofer a little in front. Bromberger could not resist the temptation, and determined to have a shot at him; so laying a handkerchief folded together on the rock to serve as a rest for his rifle, he prepared to fire. 'It is a long distance,' he said, turning to his companion, who, with the glass to his eye, was waiting to observe the effect of the shot; 'so I'll aim rather high, and somewhat to the right, to allow for the wind coming up from below. If I take him just between the shoulder and throat, you will see I shall hit in the very centre of his chest!' And a second after the rifle cracked, and down rolled the poacher, with the ball crashing through his shoulder. As you may imagine, the consternation of the others was indescribable. Bromberger and young D*** waited just long enough to see the men carry off their wounded comrade, and then creeping into the latschen, stole away down the mountain, leaving the poachers at a loss to tell whence the shot had come."

"You said just now he had a narrow escape once already: what was it?"

"Yes," I continued, "and it was not long before. The forester at Schlier See caught him in a hut where he passed the night, and had him tried for poaching; but he got off, as usual, without being punished."

"How was it he got him? Was Hofer alone?"

"No, there were two of them. The other was as great a rascal as he—Nicolaus Angel by name, or Anni Klaus as they called him. But I must begin at the beginning. Not far from Schlier See is an Alm —the Stocker Alp—and Andreas, the peasant who was there during the summer—or Stocker Ander'l as he was named—was an honest fellow, and one who could be trusted. The foresters used to keep their meal there sometimes; and even when he was gone, and the hut was empty, they would leave their frying-pan or other things stowed away in some secret place. Well, they knew that Hofer occasionally passed the night in this hut, when out on his poaching excursions; so they asked Ander'l if, when he came again, he would let them know; for they had often tried to catch him, but never were able. One night he came as usual, and Anni Klaus with him. The herdsman had only a boy in the hut beside himself; but when the two poachers were asleep up among the hay, the boy crept through the window and ran off as fast as he could to Neuhaus—it is on the road to Fischbachau you know—to tell the forester that Hofer and Nicolaus were in the hut. It happened that none of the keepers were at home, so he took with him two of the Grenz Jäger*, who were stationed there, and set off. When he got to the hut, he left the two men to watch outside; and then making a great noise, spoke roughly

* Custom-house officers, who patrol along the frontier, to prevent smuggled goods being carried across. They are in fact preventive-service men, but in arms and accoutrements are quite like our Rifle corps.

and told Andreas to get up and make him a fire, that the poachers might not suspect he was in league with the forester. On looking round he saw the two guns and the poles which the men, strangely enough, had left hanging on the wall near the hearth; and pretending to inquire whose they were, got some evasive answer from Andreas. This, he said, did not satisfy him: he suspected all was not right, and would search the hut. So he went up, and groping among the hay, seized hold of the two men's feet, and in this way he pulled them out of their hiding-place. As they had left their rifles below, instead of taking them with them when they went to lie down, they could do nothing. The thing was, I suppose, they felt so sure of being safe in the hut that they did not mind going to bed without their guns."

"Well, but how did they escape? What happened to them afterwards?"

"The forester, who was somewhat hasty, could not wait till it was broad day, but in his impatience set off with his prisoners at once. It is true they were bound, but not together; and, as they were going down, Anni Klaus made a spring, dashed into the bushes, and was out of sight in a moment."

"And the other, Hofer, what became of him?"

"He was examined, but, as is always the case, he denied everything. The powder in his pocket he said he had found, and invented a story about looking for a goat that had strayed, to account for his being on the mountain. Of course he would not confess, and he got off scot-free."

Chatting thus as we went along, we forgot the wet and the rugged stony path. Everywhere something of interest to the hunter was to be recounted: the story of an adventure with a poacher, a spot pointed out near which a certain good chamois had been shot, or where, in other days, the red-deer might always certainly be seen just as the sun was getting up over the opposite peaks.

From afar we now perceived the meadow on which our hut lay. It was still a good distance off, but the smoke was circling upwards over the brown roof, and the grass looked green, and it was cheerful to see the like after the wildness we had left. Moreover, as we went along, I was thinking all the while of the warm breakfast I would cook myself as soon as we arrived there, and of the snug room where I could hang up my clothes to dry.

Were people to reflect about it, they would often be surprised at the pleasure which, under certain circumstances, the commonest sights are able to afford them. When therefore the traveller recounts, and dwells upon, some trifling incident—a mere sound perhaps—he should not on that account be set down as trivial. It was not a trifle to *him*. You will perceive this when you have been a whole day among the rocks, and at last chance upon a spot whence you happen to see smoke curling in the air. Your heart bounds at the sight; and though as yet you have not even a glimpse of the hut whence it proceeds, in thought you are already in the human habitation. From that moment

there is an end of your loneliness,—that handful of blue vapour has filled up the distance which separated you from your kind.

And when the mists suddenly clear away, and show you a patch of green, and hard and determined outlines—it matters not of what—how beautiful you think them! and your gladdened eye flies to the place to alight upon it, after having been for hours unable to find one little spot of earth whereon to rest.

When we reached the hut, the first thing as usual was to look to the rifles; and then taking off the heavy shoes, soaked with rain like all the rest of my things, I went into the kitchen to see after the bread and milk, or "milk soup*," as the peasants here call it. I found the neatherd with a large mass of delicious butter in his hands, just made. In a few minutes I had a blazing fire crackling on the hearth, and while a pan full of creamy milk was boiling, the brown loaf was sliced into the pan in readiness. It was ten o'clock, and I had been out since three; so that, when at last the frothing milk was poured over the bread, and I had carried it into the room, and sat there comfortably drying in the warmth, I enjoyed to the full the luxury of that plentiful repast. The herdsman too brought a

* There ought to be a lump of butter put into the hot milk to make the genuine "milk soup," and the cow-herd wanted very much to fling in a piece. He was surprised I could think of eating it without a pinch of salt being added, "for," said he, "if you don't put any, the milk will be quite sweet." He looked rather astonished when I told him that was just what I liked, and by his manner I saw he thought my taste a barbarous one, though he did not say so.

large piece of the fresh-made butter on a clean board, and fetching a pinch of salt, put it down with the loaf on the table before me. What could man desire more? There is positive happiness in such a meal, and I cannot think that any one, who had himself known the luxury of appeasing his hunger with warm food when cold and famishing, would ever turn away unkindly from the starving wretch asking alms to buy himself bread.

As the weather was still bad we remained at the hut. There was an old almanack lying in the window, containing a really interesting account of Napoleon's stay on board the Bellerophon. Some one, they told me, had brought it up and left it there.

By the time I had finished my story the rain ceased; the blue sky again was visible, and we left the hut and turned our steps homewards.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE OLD BUCK.

Should you ever go up the Oester Berg, you will see on your right hand, quite at the top, and just before you arrive at the first meadow, a little wooden chapel, with a rude bank before it, in order that the passer-by may there kneel and pray. We had just reached this spot, talking as was our wont of matters that most interested us, when Neuner, suddenly stopping in his story, exclaimed, "There 's a chamois! Come on, don't stop!" he said, as I lagged behind to examine the mountain-side and discover where he was. A few steps further, and we reached the bench beside the chapel, whence with our glasses we could watch the animal without his observing us.

"Where is he, Neuner?"

"Look," he replied, "you see that long strip of geröll coming down from the latschen; well, to the right is a black spot,—that 's he."

"Ah! now I see him; he is looking down at us."

"Yes, he heard us talking; but who would ever have thought of his minding it at such a distance? The thing is, the chamois have grown unusually shy from being hunted about wherever they go. They never have any peace; the peasants are firing eternally, and even though they may not hit them, the noise scares and makes them as wild as possible."

"'Tis a capital buck," I observed, examining him with my glass. "Now he is going: he is turning round, and will soon be among the latschen. Now he stops again,—just in the middle of the geröll. How capitally I see him now! He is looking down at us again. What can he be afraid of!" And at once he disappeared among the rocks and bushes.

What was to be done? To reach the spot where he had been standing would take, at the very least, three-quarters of an hour—besides he was gone; and though, from the way in which he left the open space for a covert, I judged he would not be very distant, still it was an impossibility to reach the rocks above him without being heard, they were so steep and difficult.

"The only thing would be," said Neuner musing, "to wait for him up there. He is often where we just now saw him; a little higher or lower, as may be, but still in the neighbourhood."

"Do you think he will be out again this evening? Far off he is not, of that I am certain; most likely in among the latschen, under the wall of rock to the left, for he went away quite leisurely."

"No, he probably is not far, but whether he will be out again this evening is a question; besides," continued Neuner, looking up to the rocks just over the spot where the chamois had been standing, "the way up there is most difficult. It is no joke, I assure you. There is but one place where you can pass, just above the geröll yonder, past the latschen, and so over the ridge of the mountain: that is the only way out. You have to creep up between and under the crags: 'tis an awkward place, and you see there are no latschen the greater part of the distance."

While I listened to him I was examining the places he was describing with my glass, following him step by step, and looking out to find which would be the best spot to attempt the passage. Once on the commanding crag jutting out over the vale, I should command the whole space where the chamois would be likely to pass, and should have a fair though perhaps a long shot, as he sauntered about on the patches of verdure, or sunned himself on the blocks of stone.

"I see the place where it would be most likely I could get up," said I to Neuner: "the rock is steep, and the ledge in one part very narrow, but still I think I could manage it."

"Bauer was there once, and said it was extremely difficult, but I dare say you could do it; however," he added, after a moment's reflection, "I have been thinking it would be better to try for him in another way. We will go round the mountain, and you," turning to the young forester who was with us, "you

wait here an hour, and then go up to the ridge, and keep along it for a good distance. Afterwards you must climb along the steep wall of rock above where we shall be standing, and come out at the further end. Make as much noise as you like, but do not start for a full hour. Let me see: it is twelve now by my watch,—at one you can set off; you will want an hour to reach the top."

"Yes: full that," said the young fellow; "'tis scrambling work there, but in about an hour I can do it."

We went on, and presently were going to quit the path and enter the wood, but Neuner thought it was better to keep even still further down before doing so. "He may see us," he said, "for the forest has been rather thinned here. I know that buck well: he is a most cunning fellow, and so shy that it is the most difficult thing in the world to get near him. Bauer shot at him once, but missed: he has been shot at too by the poachers, so that he is as wary as an old fox."

"Is that his usual haunt where we saw him today?"

"Why he changes his place pretty often. Sometimes he is opposite on the left-hand side, when no cattle are there; sometimes he will wander round to the Fricker. He ought not to have gone away just now, far below him as we were; but that comes from being shot at so often."

We looked at our watch, and found that we had fifty minutes to get to the place where I was to stand; by that time he whom we left behind would be on

the move. Twenty minutes—forty—fifty minutes—at last we are there, but it was good climbing to accomplish it in that time. Just above where we stood an isolated crag rose from the steep side of the mountain. "There you will take your stand," said Neuner; "you have a good view below and above you, and if the buck is not gone he will be sure to pass down here when he hears footsteps coming up the other side. Look! you see those loose stones: he will cross those, and you can fire as is most convenient, either then or as he passes lower down. But all that you know without my telling you; so clamber up and choose your place, and keep a sharp look-out, for by this time my comrade will be on the move." And thus saying he left me, to take his stand somewhat higher, nearer the summit.

With my heels well in the earth, so as not to slip forward, I sat down, rifle in hand, where I could command the depth immediately below on my right hand, and at the same time see far up the mountain—indeed nearly to the sky-line. I was gloriously enthroned. To my left the piled-up mountains, grey or snow-covered, with the magnificent Zug Spitz forming the last outwork of the impassable barrier, and the peaks of all just veiled with a thinly-woven cloud; before me the whole declivity, with broken rocks and precipices and green bushes, stretching downwards to the vale; Farchant, with its red church-spire, its cottages, and road and river; while further off across the pasturage was Garmisch, at the foot of the Kramer. To the

right there was a sweet sight. Through a dip in the mountain the high vale of Ettal appeared,—a beautiful expanse of green-sward, and the stately church too was seen; and behind this peep in the mountain other distinct peaks were visible, gradually sloping downwards to the plains, and losing themselves at last in the flat land beyond. I looked on all this from my rocky throne, and the sight and the feeling of self-reliance, and of strength in every limb, filled my whole frame with a thrill of exhilarating gladness. And over my broad domain—for mine it was, but without the care of governing—there lay a murmuring stillness; the hum of life that breathed and moved below me in the vale,—of distant cataracts reverberating among the hollow rocks: it hung in the air, or rather was inwoven with it. It was a very different stillness from that of the high desolate mountain-peaks; for there it is a palpable thing, which clings to your heart and oppresses your chest by its weight; and it comes upon you surely, like the chill of death, that creeps along the limbs, and cannot be evaded, despite your inmost striving and endeavour.

It has often occurred to me, when thus looking down upon a land, how solemnly sad must have been the feelings of Moses when he went up from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, the highest point of the mountains of Nebo. Though he was an old man, how must his heart have swelled at what he saw,—the Jordan and the groves of palms, and the fat pasturages of Basan stretching away into the distance; the moun-

tains with the thick oak-woods of their valleys, and on the plain the herds of the Tribes, while before him he looked over "The City of Palm-trees," Jericho, and away "unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun:" and then the remembrance that he was gazing on that earth for the last time! But, above all, how in that mountain solitude must he have felt his loneliness! There is to me something quite overwhelming in the thought of going up unto a mountain to die. It is an almost superhuman act, worthy indeed of a Prophet,—of one "whom the Lord knew face to face;"—but is not for the men of this generation.

I sat here with my hand on my rifle for an hour and a half; but the minutes did not pass laggingly: I was all attention, and eye and ear were watching for the slightest circumstance that might betoken the approach of a chamois. Moreover I would every now and then cast a look at the world at my feet, and let the grandeur and the loveliness fill my heart. Fancy besides was busily at work, as is ever the case with the hunter when awaiting the approach of game. At such times, what pleasant visions pass before his brain; what delicious hopes that *may be* realized! The buck I was expecting was not only a good one, but a well known one too. He had been pursued by several, and all had failed to obtain the prize. Many were the shots that had been fired after him, but they all had missed. He had become notorious by his escapes: he was quite an historical personage. And should

he *now* come—yonder, for example, near those stones —and I be lucky enough to bring him down, how proudly should I return home and relate that the old buck had at last fallen! Then too, in after times, when the keepers would talk of their exploits, and of the noble stags or sturdy chamois that had fallen here or there,—each one remembered as accurately, with place and date, as a succession of monarchs,—then would this famous buck be mentioned, and they would tell how he had been often followed in vain, and how at last "the Englishman*" brought him death.

And these fine imaginings were all I had, for no chamois came. At length, high up among the latschen the young forester appeared, making his way downward as well as he was able: he had seen nothing, it was therefore evident the wary old buck had betaken himself to some remoter stronghold.

Such a place as that where I was watching is my delight—is the delight indeed of every hunter; for from it I could have seen the game, had any come, long before it reached me. And this is always pleasant; not only because it gives you time for preparation, but on account of the delicious excitement you feel in every vein, from the moment you espy the coming creature till that other moment when you feel it is your own. Your hopes, your fears, your longings—all that makes up the sum of the enjoyment—is thus heightened by being prolonged. You watch its approach with greedy eyes, and full of anxieties: the excitement would choke

* "Der Herr Engländer," as the people always named me.

you if it lasted long; yet two such minutes—and they seem hours—are worth whole ordinary days.

The flutter and nervousness felt by him whose whole heart is in the chase, when he first is in presence of the stag, is a curious psychological phenomenon. The Germans have a special name for this state, and call it "Hirsch Fieber" (Stag fever). The excitement you are in quite lames you. Of course it varies in degree with different persons, according to temperament, and the phlegmatic will probably never experience it at all. In me it showed itself in the highest degree. When I heard the rush of the stag among the branches, or saw him approaching at a distance, my heart began to beat *audibly*, my breath came quickly, every limb trembled, and I felt half suffocated. To take a deliberate aim was of course impossible, for my rifle rose and fell like a bough swayed by the wind. But I remember one instance in which a sort of magnetic influence seemed to be exercised over me. I was waiting for a stag on the edge of the covert. Presently I heard something rustle, and the fever began; but only a kid leaped by, and I was calm again. Soon after I heard the step of the stag, and in another second his majestic head looked forth from the green branches. On he came towards me, down a gentle slope, slowly and unaware of my presence. The rifle had been raised when first I heard his approach, and it was levelled still; the hair-trigger was set, and a breath almost would have been sufficient to move the trigger; my finger too was upon it, and I wished to pull, yet for

some cause or other I was unable to do so. There I stood, the magnificent stag opposite me, and I charm-struck and spell-bound. The slightest movement of the finger would have been enough, *but I could not move it;* and only when he had disappeared, did my fast-clenched teeth relax, and I drew a long breath and felt myself relieved.

Since then I have understood the power of the snake over other animals; how by fixing its eyes on a bird or rabbit the prey will become so fascinated as to be helpless for escape, but awaits the monster's approach, and even walks into his jaws. The influence, it is true, is not quite the same in both cases; for in the hunter this want of power to execute his will does not arise from fear, but is probably merely an intense anxiety not to miss the mark,—a violent struggle between suddenly aroused emotions. In time the "fever" wears off; yet occasionally, though you flatter yourself you are grown stoically calm, and that an old sportsman like you is not to be disturbed by such freaks and fancies, —occasionally, I say, if you are kept long in suspense, you too will get the "fever;"—you will feel it laying hold of you in spite of all your efforts to shake it off*.

I do not remember any allusion to this *extreme* state by English sportsmen. They acknowledge being "nervous;" nothing however transpires of chattering

* I know a forester who has never been able to get over it. I once saw him when we were out together after a stag. "He's coming! he's coming!" he stammered, as he caught sight of antlers between the trees, and his eyes stared, and he trembled as though it had been a ghost.

of teeth, of gasping for breath, or of violent tremblings throughout the whole body; yet I do not doubt that the presence of the red-deer of Scotland may have the same potent charm as that of his German compeer; and I am quite sure, if it ever were my good fortune to get a day's stalking in the Highlands, that such a sight as Sir Edwin Landseer has shown us in his "Drive" would set my heart beating exactly as of old.

It was now three o'clock, and we turned our steps downwards; but still, not to give up a chance, we determined to have a look in a deep ravine that yawned like a terrific gash in the mountain's side. It extended almost to the very summit,—jagged, deep, and frightful. Hither, Neuner said, the chamois loved to resort; it was a quiet spot, or rather one undisturbed by human neighbourhood; but the roar of the near waterfall resounded in the chasm. We cautiously climbed down towards the brink, and looked over and around. Every crag was minutely examined with scrutinizing eye; our gaze pierced among the stunted shrubs and the withered stems of ghastly-looking skeletons of trees; and then we looked high, high up, where the mountain had been torn, and where the savage rent had left a perpendicular wall of glaring stone. But all was without sign of life,—not a creature was to be seen. We were still looking, when a sharp whistle came across to us over the broken hollow. We started, and each looked at the other in surprise; and then, with widely-open eye and with head bent forward, gazed and stared toward the rocks whence

the sound proceeded. It was a chamois that had observed us; but none of us could see anything. At last I did: "There!" I whispered eagerly, and pointing straightforwards across the chasm.

"Beyond the first or the second ravine?" asked Neuner.

"Beyond the second."

"I see it!" he exclaimed almost immediately.

"A doe!" said the younger forester.

We watched a long while, and the chamois sprang up the rocks, and then stopped to browse: it seemed no longer afraid. Any attempt to reach it was out of the question; for had it not been so far off, we could only have stalked it from below, and the hollow that separated us was so deep and difficult that, even if practicable, it would have been the work of hours to get down into and up again out of the gully: besides there were two such ravines, and it was not possible to avoid them. We watched the doe till she was out of sight, and then turned homewards.

Here and there on declivities will be found open spaces, without trees or shrubs, and covered with a long grass, the blades of which do not grow erect, but hang downward with the slope. The sun and air dry the stems, and make their surface as slippery as ice, and these places are perhaps the most difficult of any to descend: if you slip, down you go, till a tree or shrub or some inequality of surface stops your descent. There was no danger here; but when such a grassy slope or *laane* ends on the brink of a precipice,

it is rather perilous if your foot should glide. Some years ago a dairymaid from one of the huts on the mountains near Berchtesgaden slipped in coming down a *laane*. She was unable to stop herself or hold on by the long grass, and went over the brink at the foot of the slope into the abyss. When the poor girl was found, the braid of her hair, which she wore twisted in a knot behind her head, was lying in the cavity of the brain. Misfortunes occur almost every year from the treacherous smoothness of these grassy slopes.

We at last regained the path. It was raining at Garmisch. The effect of the slanting sun-rays on the thin clouds was of exceeding loveliness. The mountains were arrayed in pearly hues; vapoury horizontal mists were lying lightly on the air near their tops, but their grey and snowy peaks could be seen rising above them. A magnificent rainbow now blushed into existence, spanning the mountain to the very top with its lofty elliptical curvature: while the part that was earthward rested on the side of the mountain, showering a halo of rosy and violet light upon the trees and bushes. The whole scene was surpassingly beautiful.

A rugged and broken path leads from the road down to Farchant. We were full an hour descending to the village, and one hour of such descent fatigues and racks the joints far more than a whole morning's climbing: it was a hard day's work, and we had all enough. Tired and dirty as I was, the sight of the inn cheered and gladdened me. Having first well cleaned my rifle, I attended to myself; and presently,

refreshed and with a good appetite, went down to the little parlour to sup, where I found my two companions and the other worthies of the village*.

My friend Franz von Kobell has made the fancies and imaginings of the hunter, while expecting game, the theme of one of his poems. He has, with his accustomed truthfulness of delineation, pictured all the hopes and longings which the chamois-hunter will cherish and dally with on such occasions; and he has given the end of these pleasant castles in the air, with a quiet humour and, as I have often found by unwelcome experience, with comic truth. And comic enough it often is, if we compare our expectations at such times with the eventual reality. Yet we always weave new fancies, and look at the rocks and bushes and the cool ravine, and think and wish so long, till at last we feel sure a chamois *will* spring down yonder slope, or that a good stag *must* soon emerge from the shades of the forest. And at such times all seems so very plausible, and wears so comely an air of truth, that at last good, honest, jog-trot, sober, unimaginative Com-

* I afterwards (Feb. 16, 1851) got a letter from my friend Neuner, containing news of the old chamois buck. He writes:—"The chamois that remain with me the summer through have this winter gone over into the chase of the Eschenlohe peasantry, and have, as I am told, been considerably reduced in number; so that with me, next summer, there will be but poor sport, and the whole season's shooting will consist at most of but a few head of game. The buck on the Fricker Reisen has not changed his quarters; he is still alive, and has his stand in the same place where he used to be."

mon Sense yields to the pretty coquetry and winsome ways of Fancy, and believes, and even sees, all that she has been archly whispering in his ear.

The lines I have here attempted to render in English verse, are written in the original in a Bavarian dialect.

The Chamois Hunter's Soliloquy.

"Ha! what a glorious deep ravine!
Hence I can see far round:
Here on this spot I 'll sit me down,
A better can't be found.
A chamois *must* be up among
Those latschen near yon blocks;
And if he cross to yonder slope,
He *must* pass down those rocks.
And down below I track'd a stag
As big as any cow:
He too will soon be on the move,
And here I 've chance enow."

So there the Hunter takes his seat,
The hours roll by apace,
And thinks of all that might appear,
At such a famous place.
If only he 'd a little luck!
If but a lynx would come!
"Old Johann once did shoot one so,
And here I know are some.
A lynx! Ay, that 's not easy though,
The surface is but small."
Then he takes aim, and thinks that he
Could hit one with a ball.
"And Michael too,—just such a place
'Twas where he saw the bear;
Now if *he* came and trudged along
Right down the pathway there,
He 'd get knock'd over the ravine:—
What would our Ranger say?
And how they 'd question me, and stare!
There 'd be fine work that day!

My lassie would be proud of me,
She 'd tell it all the folk;
'Twould bring me seventy gulden too,
Faith, that were no bad joke!
'Twould be in all the papers too,
The King of it would hear;
Why, who knows but he 'd say, 'I 'll have
Him made Head Forester'?

"Should a wolf come, 'twould also do:
Yes,—wolves they prowl far round,
And such a place as this they like,
Where something 's to be found.
A bran-new rifle then I 'd have,
As handsome as could be;
And carved upon the stock a wolf,
With date, that all might see.
And should one at a shooting-match
Ask 'From the city, eh'?
'No, no, 'tis his who shot the wolf,'
Is what they all would say."

And so with rifle ready cock'd,
He sits, and thinks, and thinks,
Till it grows dark; but nothing comes,
Bear, chamois, wolf, nor lynx.

CHAPTER XXV.

A STROLL WITHOUT MY RIFLE.

Whoever passes through Partenkirchen should take a walk to "The Clam." It is a wonderful place, and the unlearned as well as the learned cannot fail to be impressed by the sight. Even he who knows nothing of geology, will understand that this earth of ours must be very old, when he sees the channel that the water has here for centuries been gnawing through the solid rock. Go and look at it, and stop there awhile; and as you peep over into the deep chasm, try to think of the years that the water has been thus toiling to wear out the hard stone; and how one century dragged on, and another weary century, and the still toiling water had only got a little lower down. After that, and when you see what it has accomplished, the word "Time" may perhaps convey to your mind another meaning than it has hitherto done.

The Eib See is not far off, and I went there. It lies at the foot of the Zug Spitz—it seems so at least,

quite at the foot; but were you to try to reach it, you might walk a whole day before getting there. The lake is shut in on every side with black forests of pine; the water itself is deep blue, and above the dark woods the peaks of the mountain-range appear of a dazzling whiteness. The intelligent, healthy young savage who rowed us on the lake, said there were seven islands in it; they all belonged to his father, who had bought them, lake and all, for 100 florins (£8). They caught carp there of 38 lbs. weight, which our little boatman then carried to Partenkirchen for sale, and got for them 15 kreutzers (5*d.*) a pound. In winter, he told us, when the lake was frozen, and no snow had fallen, you would think it still was open, so clear and transparent was the icy surface. Then they go across with waggons and horses, to fetch the wood from the opposite mountains; but when much snow is on the ground they see no living creature till Spring returns, for to get out of their hut is impossible.

These mountain-lakes are sometimes moved by strange fits; and, without apparent cause, the dark water will suddenly grow agitated, and heave and swell as though some great catastrophe were taking place below in its mysterious caverns. When the earthquake of Lisbon occurred, the Walchen See was dreadfully disturbed, though the sky above was clear, and the day serene and calm.

I inquired of the peasant here—"The Lord of the Isles"—about his way of life, and learned that not

even butter entered into his simple diet, so great was his poverty. Yet how cheerful he was withal! Milk, potatoes, and broth thickened with maize-flour, were his sole food; but, like a true philosopher, seeking out the gleams of brightness that illumined his dark life, and making the most of them as so much positive gain, he added gaily, "Oh, but I am healthy, and strong and well." He did not know what a catarrh was, he said, "*but thought it must be a very unpleasant thing to have*,—he should not like it at all."

"Happy fellow!" exclaimed the Minister Von der P * * *, who happened to overhear him,—"happy fellow, he never wants to go to Carlsbad for the waters!"

I stopped at Grünau on coming back, and, going into the single house standing there, chatted with the landlord, asking many questions, as I have the bad habit of doing.

"Are you from Munich?" he inquired.

"No, from England."

"From England! Ah, *I have heard of England!* I have heard too that the people there are very skilful; is it true?"

My good old friend Kobell was just then at Hohenschwangau on a visit, so I stuffed a few things into my rücksack, and set off one afternoon to go and shake hands with him. A little strip of Austria runs into the Bavarian territory before you get to Lermos, and intersects your road thither. I mention it merely for the sake of bearing testimony to the obliging be-

haviour of the Austrian authorities in general, of which I again had a proof on arriving at the frontier line guarded by the officers of the Customs.

"Your pass!"

"I have none."

"I cannot let you proceed: stop while I speak to the officer."

On starting I had quite forgotten that I should have to cross a neck of Austrian land, and was therefore unprovided with papers to show who I was, although my passport had been signed by the Austrian ambassador in case of need. All this I explained.

"It is most unfortunate: our orders are so very strict at present, to let no one through who cannot produce his papers. Have you nothing you can show me? I should be sorry to send you back, but, you see, if anything went wrong I should get into trouble. Have you no papers at all? Where are you going, and who are you? where do you come from?"

If I remember rightly, I had sense enough *not* to say that Lord Palmerston and I were countrymen; and at last, after giving a plain statement of my plans, was allowed to proceed.

"I should be very sorry to doubt what you say," was the courteous rejoinder; "only, another time pray bring your papers with you. You may pass. Good evening, and a pleasant journey!"

The innkeeper at Lermos, in answer to some question of mine, mentioned the distances of several places

from the village,—to Vienna so many miles, to Trieste so many.

"But Trieste!" I said, "what makes you think of Trieste?"

"It interested me much once," he said, "when the Englishman, Herr Waghorn, used to be coming this way from India."

"What," I said, "you knew Mr. Waghorn?"

"Yes, he was here six times. Ah, that was an enterprising mind*!" he exclaimed, with a dash of sorrow in his tone, as if the enthusiasm and genius of the man had not left even *his* old heart insensible, but had stirred it up and aroused it, and was not to be forgotten, though the stranger only came rushing by like a comet on its swift, surprising course. How full he was of admiration at Waghorn's mighty energy and indomitable will! Indeed it was this last which seemed to have left on the minds of all to whom I spoke, something like a sense of irresistible power. And no wonder! he appears among them, and old difficulties and hindrances give way; he batters down every obstacle, and, hurrying past, shows them that by his will, solely by his strong will, he can annihilate the Impossible.

"For nine days and nights," continued mine host, "the horses were kept ready: there were eight ordered, and three postillions. That last time—I remember it well—the one post cost 116 florins; but it was the same to him, no matter what it cost: all

* "Das war ein unternehmender *Geischt!*"

he cared for was time—that was everything; nothing could be done quick enough. Ah, it put life into us all whenever we heard he was coming!"

"And did he never stop to take any refreshment?" I asked.

"Perhaps he just had time to swallow a cup of coffee, but all in a trice,—he allowed himself scarcely a second; or he took something with him as he jumped into the carriage, and ate it as he went along. He must have been very strong to bear what he did, but sometimes he looked exceedingly tired; yet he was always full of life, and only cared about getting on."

"And what sort of a man was he?"

"Very friendly, but severe—very severe with the postillions. And he was right: he paid for the trouble, and well too; there was no stint of money when he came."

"And how did he travel?"

"Always in a light carriage, sometimes quite alone, and in the others were the letters. They were crammed full; it was something quite wonderful to see the quantity of boxes he had with him. Everything was ordered some time beforehand; and we were told, from a certain day, to be in readiness till he arrived. We were constantly on the watch, for there was no knowing when he would come. Sometimes when we least expected him he would all of a sudden be here,—in the middle of the night perhaps,—tearing along, and in a moment on again. When once he was announced, from that instant we had no rest, for we were obliged

to have all ready at a moment's warning, or he would have been terribly angry. Yes, yes, that was indeed an enterprising mind."

Poor Waghorn! how he toiled on incessantly to achieve his great work, and what has been the reward?

The following morning I took a place in the diligence to the next post-town, and presently, when we came to a hill, I got out of the carriage and talked with the postillion as we walked up. The conversation of the evening before was still in my thoughts.

"Did you ever drive the Englishman, Waghorn, when he passed through Lermos?" I asked of my companion.

"No," he said, "for I was not at Lermos then; but at Kempten I have seen him. How he drove! How he went along! never was seen anything like it. Though I did not drive him, I have heard a great deal about him from my comrades. He paid them immensely, and they never could go fast enough for him: he used to keep on scolding them, and telling them to drive faster and faster all the way. Once he came from Trieste to Lermos in thirty-two hours; but then, you know, he had not to wait a moment, for when it was known he was coming everybody flew."

"And did they like to have him come?"

"Oh yes, to be sure; and when they heard he was in sight, the people used all to run out to see him arrive. Further on there is a hill—I'll show it to you as we pass; well, when Herr Waghorn was expected,

some one used to be posted there to wait for him, and directly he caught sight of his carriage dashing along, he fired a pistol, that the people below might know he was near,—for Reute, as I suppose you know, is just at the foot of the hill; but though it is a good way to the bottom, he used to come down at such a rate that we could hardly get out the horses before he was already there; and then he wanted always to be on again, and in the same moment too. I never saw such a man before!"

"And you never drove him?"

"No, I wish I had, for he always paid from the hour the horses were ordered; and when we waited four or five days for him, the whole time was reckoned, and some of my comrades got a fine sum. When once the orders had come, those among us who were to drive him were not allowed to leave the horses night or day for a single minute: they used to lie down, ready dressed, in the hay, and on his arrival were up and off. Many and many a time I have heard them tell about Herr Waghorn."

"I wonder," said I, "the post-masters let their horses be driven so fast, for they will not do it generally."

"But he paid for it. You know he did not pay the usual sum, but double and treble; and then, if a horse was hurt, it was made good at once. At Kempten, I remember, one horse fell dead,—at such a tremendous rate did they drive along; and the price the post-master asked was paid down instantly, and with-

out a word. You see, the thing was, the horses had been waiting for more than a week, and had not been out of the stable all that time, and they were well fed too; so that when they came out at last, after standing so long, that particular one could not bear it, and it killed him outright; if he had not been so long without exercise it would not have hurt him. Look," said he, as we reached a hill-top, "this is the place: that is Reute you see down below, and just here the man used to stand on the look-out. It is a good way to the town, is it not? well, he was down the hill in a moment." And in a fair space of time we were rumbling through the streets, up to the very post-house where Waghorn, anxious, longing, and half dead with fatigue, but not worn out—he was too enthusiastic for that—had dashed along on his way to London, from India and the Desert.

I went on to Ammergau, and there, to my great delight, found my friends the Solachers. "Xavier is here, and Lisl; come, I 'll show you where they are, they will be so glad to see you!" said Nanny; and off I went with her, sure of a hearty welcome.

On the road thence to Partenkirchen lies Ettal, with a large handsome church, not quite complete. The building was interrupted by the confiscation of the monasteries. The monastery adjoining it is of great size, and the whole together forms a handsome square. Brewhouse, cellars, granaries, barns, stables, cow-houses,—all that pertained to an establishment of this sort, was to be found here, with water in abund-

ance flowing to every part where it could be of use. The whole, with the adjacent woods belonging to the convent, was sold for 40,000 florins, somewhat more than £3000; the real worth being 200,000 florins. In other places similar estates were disposed of for even less. The haste the Government made to "realize" the property of which it thus had got possession, caused land to be disposed of for the most insignificant sums. As a vast number of such religious houses were suddenly, and all at the same moment, thrown into the market, there was a glut of property for sale; besides, few persons were prepared to purchase such large domains. The Jews therefore, for the most part, bought them up, and at prices that ensured immense profit by the speculation.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE KROTENKOPF AND THE KRAMER.

Bauer was to come from Farchant, and meet me at the Oester Berg; I therefore started alone for Partenkirchen, and went up the well-known path leading to the hut. As I walked slowly on, with that deliberate pace which, when you have a long ascent before you, it is well to choose, I presently reached a bushy spot, where however a precipitous steep on one side showed the valley, with its winding stream and cottages and pasturage lying at my feet. On a sudden, from out the green branches on my right, rose Bauer to his full height, and gave me a cheerful greeting. It was like one of Roderick Dhu's men starting up from his ambush of heather.

"I thought you would soon come," he said; "so I sat down here to wait for you, and was looking across to my sister's cottage at Ettal. It is just visible through that dip in the hill yonder. She was in the garden a moment ago, and then somebody came in from the road. I could see all capitally from here."

We went on, and were soon at our old quarters. I fetched a pan of milk from the cupboard, and slicing into it the bread which I had brought with me, had my supper, and then went to bed.

The next morning we were out betimes, and, as we mounted higher, saw, soon after dawn, a couple of stags and some chamois on one side of the Bischof. What luck! We crept along over the ground, as though we feared to hurt the blades of grass; and, carefully avoiding the stones, stole softly onwards. And now the spot is reached whence the game will surely be visible, and we shall be able to get a shot; and lifting our heads slowly and carefully, our eyes sweep over the sides of the hollow, expecting every moment to light on the object of our hopes. But there is no need of all this care, for not a creature is to be seen. We then examined the slot, and found that the stag had, at most, eight points on his antlers; he had gone over a shoulder of the mountain, and across some splashy ground covered with many traces both of deer and chamois.

We were advancing slowly up the Krotenkopf,—a mountain somewhat less than 8000 feet high; on our left the stony Bischof extended its broad side before us, over which was now spread a thin covering of snow.

"Do you see anything?" I asked of Bauer, who was looking fixedly across at the opposite mountain.

"I *think* it 's a chamois!" he replied, with his eyes still fixed on a certain dark spot; and turning his head

a little on one side, as if to look at it from another point of view.

"Yes, it *is* a chamois," he continued, as we looked through our glasses; "that's all right! We have plenty of time, for he will not go away. But let us on now: yonder—do you see those rocks,—great blocks of stone, just on the shoulder of the mountain?—well, there I think you had better stand; and then I will go over the ridge, and roll down stones, to put the chamois on the move; he will be sure to come round close to where you are, and you can get a famous shot."

We were a considerable time in reaching the place, yet it did not seem far off. But in the mountains distances are very illusory, and you are sure to fancy them shorter than they really are.

"How long will you be crossing over the ridge?" I asked of Bauer, as he was about to set off.

"I can hardly say: it 's a good way up and round to the other side. But I will tell you what; as soon as the chamois is on the move, I 'll fire off my rifle, so that you may know, and be on the look-out."

"Very well: this is a good place where I now am. I will keep behind these rocks, and shall thus be almost hidden."

"When he comes, he will pass along yonder. Do you see?—just there, where those stones are peeping out of the snow." And off he bounded with a nimble step, and was soon out of sight, as he took a slanting direction over the mountain. There was plenty of

snow where I stood; for the spot being overshadowed, there it lay week after week, safe from the influence of the sun. I brushed some away, and lay down on the rock. I was tired and listless, and then grew angry with myself for being so. I could not tell what was the matter with me; but, for some cause or other, I strangely enough did not feel the intense interest which always possessed me at such moments of expectation. I took out a crust and ate it, but more for pastime than from appetite. I was annoyed at my own indifference, and at such unwonted apathy. A charm seemed to have been broken, and my eyes now looked at the magnificent forms about me, no longer wonderingly, but as though they were quite common, everyday things. Suddenly a thundering sound reverberates from the Bischof, and rolls up the sides of the Krotenkopf; and then falls back again, like a great wave, that, breaking its massiveness against the rocks, tumbles to pieces with a low, murmuring moan;—it was from Bauer's rifle. I started up, and something of the old feelings came creeping on, but sluggishly, and not with a sudden rush as heretofore. I was behind a piece of rock, that covered me entirely up to my chin, and looked right in front, where I expected to see the chamois appear, but nothing came. Presently a stone moved slightly; and turning my eyes to the side whence the sound proceeded, there stood two chamois at gaze on my left hand, one behind the other: both were immoveable, and looking steadfastly in my direction. I was as immoveable as they; it was

evident they suspected danger, but I did not think they could see me, for they had not whistled as yet; and there was still a possibility they might, in moving on, come a little nearer, for at present they were a long distance off. There they stood for a time, I all the while hardly daring to move even my eyelids, anxious what the next moment would bring with it. The nearest chamois was the smaller of the two,—it was of a reddish colour, while the other larger one was quite black. But he was the further off, so, if I fired at all, I thought it would be better to take the nearer animal. Thus we remained in presence of each other; all was still and silent as the very air,—it was as if everything had been petrified by some sudden spell.

Suddenly the nearer chamois utters the sharp whistle; but he gazes still, and is motionless. I now knew there was no hope of their coming nearer; in a moment they would be off. There was no time to lose; and, bringing my cheek down to my rifle, to take aim, I carefully prepared to fire. The loud report breaks the long silence. "Is he hit?" I ask myself. "No, they're both going away! It cannot have touched him! Yet the one that lags behind—he does not leap up the mountain so lightly as the other! I don't know though—something seems the matter with him—yet—yes,—he 's off!" Far as he now was, I still fired the other barrel, and knew at once I had missed.

I followed their track some distance, to see if there were any drops of blood on the snow, but to my great

vexation found nothing. Bauer now came over the mountain, and at once called to ask if I had got one of them.

"There were two, were there not?" he said. "I only saw the second after I had fired my rifle. You have missed? What, did not they come near? No, you can't have missed! Where were they?" he continued, as he looked for their slot in the snow.

"But I tell you I have. For a moment I thought I had hit him, but now I see I did not."

"Where were they standing when you fired?"

"Further on. But it is useless to look: I have followed them already, and found nothing. Further on, —down lower—further still, if you *will* look," I called out, as he inquired about the position of the chamois.

"Here's hair enough however," he cried, holding up some in his fingers, as I ran to the place. The long black hair of the back was lying on the snow, and by its length it was evident that it had been shaved off quite close to the backbone. The supposition that one moved as though hurt, which I had a moment entertained, but afterwards given up as a mere fancy, was, I now saw, well founded. I *had* touched him. The ball had just grazed the vertebræ, but so very slightly as to cause only the momentary lameness I had remarked.

"Look how long they are!" said Bauer, examining the speckled hairs. "Well, that was near! an eighth of an inch lower down, and he would have dropped at once. 'Twas a long shot though, that I must say."

The mishap was indeed particularly vexatious; for, had they come but a little nearer, I might easily have shot both,—right and left; and it would have been a pleasant thing to recur to in after time.

The rest of the day we saw nothing. At the hut the herd foretold change of weather. "The cattle were so wild," he said, "they had broken the pole of the waggon that morning. He was quite sure it would not be fine on the morrow; it's a sure sign when the cattle are so restless. As to the almanack writers, they may say what they like,—the cattle are never wrong."

We now turned our steps homeward. As we went along, Bauer told me how, close to the spot we were passing, he had once met some poachers. "There were five of them," he said, "and I crept through the bushes, and got quite near them unobserved. At last they saw me, and called out that I should make the best of my way off, or they would fire."

"And did you go?"

"Of course not. I was lying on the ground behind a great piece of stone, and I knew they could not touch me. No; I stopped, and looked at them well. I recognized them all, and gave their names to the Police, but nothing was done to them."

A day or two after I arranged with Bauer to go up the Kramer: though I knew there was little chance of meeting chamois there, I still wished to go; for it is possible to be prepossessed by the face of a mountain, as well as by the human countenance, and this was now the case with me. There was a hut there,—or

rather, as it was of stone, a house containing a single room, which had been constructed some years ago for the present King, should he ever seek shelter or accommodation on the mountain.

"A blanket is there, too!" said Bauer triumphantly; "and a stove is in the room; only think, a stove! The place is snug enough, but it is a long time since I was up there."

After crossing the meadows we came at once into a gulley, where the torrent came tumbling along over its rugged bed. The din of waters drowned every other sound, so that we did not hear the approach of Neuner, who suddenly stood before us, on his way down from the mountain. We stopped a moment, to interchange some questions, and to pat old Bursch's head, and then we went on up the steep and narrow path*. As we ascended higher, the wild beauty of the spot became more and more visible. In some places there were perpendicular buttresses of rock, of five or six hundred feet in height, with here and there projecting spots, covered with grass, or a pine-tree that had managed to force its roots into some chance fissure.

* One of those mishaps which occasionally occur in the mountains happened to this good dog, just before my departure from Partenkirchen. Neuner missed him on the mountain, but as he whistled for him in vain, thought he had followed the slot of a roe, and would come back after a time. He however never saw him again, and supposes he fell over the rocks in the ardour of pursuit. For two days Neuner searched the whole mountain for his dog, in case he should have got into some place whence he could not climb out again, and where he might be still alive. He called him by name, as he knew that, if alive, he could answer by a bark or howl. In spite of all his endeavours he could find no traces of him.

This was a "Graben," as well as the "Rethel Clam," but very unlike it in appearance and character. Grand as the forms were, the whole was so shut in by the peculiar shape of the mountain, and the parts brought so near together, that verdant nooks were formed, giving the whole a mild aspect; moreover there was herbage in abundance among the grey rocks, and the foliage of pines and latschen to break the rugged and sharp outlines. Here and there you saw little green spots, that you would gladly have alighted on, had you had wings to fly there. On our path was overshadowing wood; and the shade, and a languor I could not shake off, soon brought me to a resting-place. It was a delicious afternoon, and, though the 23rd of September, agreeably warm. I looked before me, down in the deep gully, and listened to the waters below, sounding, where we sat, just pleasantly loud enough to tell of their presence, and nothing more. While I was thus contemplating the scene, I heard the sound of bells. I listened more attentively. Yes, I was right; but then the thought occurred to me, how could such a peal as that come from Partenkirchen, or Garmisch, or indeed any other village? I looked up, to see if Bauer's countenance betrayed a sign of having heard them too; but nothing there told me that he had, and how should he? for it was the well-known sound of the Bath Abbey bells, that were ringing as merry a peal as I had ever heard them do in the days of my boyhood. I got up, and stood, and looked round, and convinced myself I was not asleep;

but still I heard the dear, well-remembered bells, that were as familiar as the voices of old friends. Now they fell, as if borne away on the wind, and then again came swelling on the ear, as though the ringers were pulling right lustily. It was so real, that, had it been some simple church-bell merely, I might have been cheated into belief; but there was no mistaking those of my own dear native Bath. The author of that most delightful of books 'Eothen' mentions something of the sort occurring to him on a journey,—if I remember rightly, when he was crossing the Desert *.

We went on, and still on, and it seemed as if there was no end to our steep ascent. I could hardly drag my limbs along, so weary was I; and had I been alone, should certainly have lain down to sleep. Bauer was always far in advance, stopping to wait for me, and urging me on; for though we were now at last approaching the summit, which was evident from the changed character of the scenery, and from the patches of snow that were lying about, we still had a long way to go, and evening was coming on, and in such a place

* I ought perhaps to mention that I had been at Bath but a week or two before. In both cases the circumstance arose, no doubt, from the nerves being unstrung by coming illness; for it was afterwards that I fell sick at Partenkirchen, and the author of 'Eothen,' on arriving at Cairo, had an attack of fever, if not of the plague. I am inclined to think that in every instance, whether such sounds are heard at sea or elsewhere, a state of debility or excitement would be found to be an attendant circumstance, were the matter inquired into. If nothing untoward follow, it is thought no more of; but should the person by whom such music is heard die soon afterwards, it is then looked upon as a supernatural warning, and a friendly summons is recognized in those loud sounds of home.

daylight was as necessary as air to breathe. The mountain was of vast size; and, as I looked upwards to the sky-line, and saw the drear expanse, and felt my sinking strength, it seemed to me impossible that I could ever reach the hut. I had never before known such an utter prostration of strength, such a total want of anything like energy. But still I toiled on as best I could; though I was obliged—a thing I had never in my life done before—to give my rifle to Bauer to carry for me. The evening was drawing in, and we had still far to go, and the places became more rugged and difficult: every minute was valuable.

"Pray come on! If we were only down these rocks I should not care. Once out yonder and all is well; but here, if it gets dark—you see what a place it is! Exert yourself—do your best—now then, try once more!" And Bauer again led the way.

It was quite dark before we got to our destination. I hoped that, when I had eaten something, I should be better, and we therefore hastened to make a fire and cook our supper. Bauer fetched water from a neighbouring spring, and, in the darkness, this was not so soon accomplished. I meanwhile tried to get the wood into a blaze,—but oh! the torment of that fire-making! instead of flame, the hearth was involved in smoke, and the wind, pouring down the chimney, sent whole clouds into our smarting eyes. In that small space neither of us could bear it long. Now for the frying-pan, and then we shall soon have a warm, savoury meal! But what a state was that vessel in!

Covered full an inch thick with grease, rancid from staleness, and incrusted everywhere with dirt and dust, just as it had been left by the last lazy comer. This was indeed disheartening—the last drop in our cup of bitterness. However there was nothing to be done but to clean the pan, and try to make it fit for use. It took no little time to accomplish this, but it was fairly done at last. After it had been well scoured, and water repeatedly boiled in it to get rid of its impurities, we set it on the fire with a good lump of butter, while Bauer mixed the batter for the schmarren. Now all is ready, and the fair white meal and water is poured into the pan. But what a sight! it all turns black at once, looking more like the black broth of Sparta than any Christian food. Grievous as this was, the whole had in it something so comic that we could not but laugh. We let it fry however, and then tasting a bit and finding it not so *very* bad, cooked and ate a part. Luckily we discovered an old iron ladle, and having well cleaned it, boiled some water, and mixed ourselves a ladle-full of grog. This, twice filled, and some bread that I had in my rücksack, furnished us a better supper; and I still had a crust left, just enough for the morrow's breakfast. How different was this place from the hut near Kreuth, which had been made so clean and tidy, and left in such perfect order by "Catharina Hess!" It was a disgrace to a hunter to leave things in such a state,—nothing washed, the room unswept, and whatever had been used, lying about as when last

employed. On some boards, covered with straw, was our bed; and putting our joppen and the blanket over us, we were soon asleep.

I was still exhausted the next morning, though I had slept soundly; yet I did not like to give way, and tried my best to keep up, but my step that day was void of elasticity, and altogether it was sorry work. The sight at early dawn from the Kramer was indeed a glorious one. We were almost opposite the Zug Spitz, and seemingly quite near it; and it was as though we looked down upon the mountains and the snow-plains on their tops. And when the sun came, there was a lovely pageantry!

We saw only two chamois the whole day. In going home we met a man, who passed us scowlingly, and without a word,—a most unusual and strange omission, for here every wayfarer greets the other as he goes by.

"That is a poacher of Garmisch," said Bauer, as we went on; "as great a rascal as ever breathed. I have no doubt but that his rifle is hidden near, somewhere among the stones or latschen."

This was the last time but one of my going out. I again passed a night at the Oester Berg, and in the morning went out alone, though the overpowering languor still dragged me to the earth. The ground was covered with snow, and mists were on the hills, and a drizzling rain soon began to make everything wet and miserable. At last I found it was useless to try to go on: I was *obliged* to give it up, being fairly

brought to a stand-still, and literally unable to drag one foot after the other. I crawled to the hut as well as I could, and lying down close to the stove fell asleep for an hour. I afterwards managed to reach Partenkirchen, where I found, by every one telling me how yellow I was, that I had the jaundice. My languor of the preceding days was now explained. It was a grievous thing to be confined to my bed for weeks, and the mountains so near; and as day after day I turned and looked at them from my pillow, their tops clear and distinct against the bright blue sky, I felt doubly the privations that sickness brings; and yet I was in some measure compensated for the loss, for the scenes themselves were brought to my bedside,—"transcripts of Nature," as Constable would have called them, fresh from the open air, and in which tone, and forms, and colour were not copied merely, but felt. I had just before made the acquaintance of Mr. Charles Haag, who was staying here; and from the moment I was unable to leave my room, he brought me daily his portfolio, and left with me the result of each morning's or afternoon's work. Then there were effects to be talked of and discussed, picturesque figures to look at,—new acquaintances perhaps which he had made in the last walk,—opinions to be interchanged as to which of the masterly sketches laid out before me on my bed might best furnish subject for a picture; and in this way the hours went pleasantly by, and I found that I was not so greatly to be pitied after all.

From my window I saw one morning a sight which, touching as it was, had in it much of beauty. It was the funeral of a little child. I had heard the chanting of the mourning train, and on looking into the street discovered whence it came. The young child lay in the open coffin, which was carried in the arms of a man; its placid face uncovered, and nothing between it and the blue heaven. All around it were flowers, on its pillow and on both sides; and its pretty hands too were embedded on roses,—buds as tender as itself. I had never seen Death arrayed so winningly.

Note.

The distance a wounded animal will sometimes go before leaving, on the ground over which he has passed, any trace that he has been hit, is most extraordinary, and in some cases appears to me quite inexplicable. But a week or two before penning this note, four or five deer suddenly crossed my path one evening, as I was returning home through the woods. They were a great distance off; but as they stopped to gaze for a moment, I took my chance and fired. I was sure that I had hit the deer, and as they all passed among the trees, I felt still more certain from a peculiar motion I observed in one of them. I followed the slot across the snow, but saw nothing. But still, not convinced that I had missed, I kept going on and on, and at last saw a single red drop on the white surface of the ground. A little further there were more; presently, on one side of the slot there was a perfect crimson shower; and a moment or two after, the deer was seen stretched out quite dead.

Sometimes a part of the intestines will protrude, and close up the opening which the bullet has made, and then of course it is no wonder the trickling of the blood should cease. But the hemorrhage takes place inwardly, and, after following the slot for many hundred yards, and when perhaps you have given up all hope, you will very likely find the stag in a thicket quite dead, or lying in the middle of a stream, his strength having failed him in making a last effort to leap across.

It requires an experienced eye however to detect a drop or two of blood, amid the dead leaves with which the ground in the forest is covered; and where the earth is hard, or strewn with the dry foliage of the preceding summer, it is difficult even to make out the slot at all; and yet by practice you at last discern the slightest imprint in the ground, and recognize in a moment if it has been made by a deer or not.

When following the slot of an animal that you think you have wounded, without finding on the ground any traces of his being so, it is well, should he pass through a thicket, to examine the boughs he has brushed against in forcing his way through. The branches hang closed upon his broad sides, and a leaf may have swept over

the wound, and a single streak of crimson is sufficient to betray all you want to know.

"A flower thus stained, to the hunter brings
More joy than the reddest rose;
It telleth a tale, to his heart as dear
As the blush that doth all disclose."

Once I remember shooting at a wild boar, and, on going to the spot, found only that he had passed on into the wood. A beater who, like myself, was also looking about, called to me that I had missed, and showed me, in proof of his assertion, the hole my bullet had torn in a young pine close by. But even this did not convince me, and I still followed the track of the boar. At some distance I found bristles on the snow, and a little further the boar also, quite dead, but no blood anywhere except on the spot where he lay, although the ball had passed right through the body before entering the tree.

But the strangest sight I remember to have witnessed occurred with a fallow-deer—a buck. I came suddenly upon him while grazing in a glade, and fired. I looked to see the result of my shot, but he neither fell, nor dashed away. In a moment he began rocking to and fro where he stood. I went towards him, but he took no notice of my approach, and continued the rocking motion as before. I pushed him with my hand, and he rolled over and was dead. The shot-hole was quite round, and showed no redness,—not the least sign of blood was visible, and the opening was filled up by the chewed grass on which the animal had been feeding.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A CHAPTER ABOUT SCHNADAHÜPFLN*.

In the highlands of Bavaria, as is the case in all mountainous districts, the customs and amusements of the inhabitants are as different from those who dwell in the plain, as the pursuits and mode of life of the latter are different from those of the mountaineer. Separated, except by occasional intercourse, for many months in the year from the world below them, the herdsmen must be content with pleasures simple in themselves and easy of attainment. Hence that peculiar song, "Jodeln," with which the lonely milk-maid of the châlet, the woodcutter, or the peasant-boy "drives the lagging hours along," and breaks the awful silence of mountain solitude. As soon however as a few men and lassies are assembled, they have not to seek long for amusement. Then begins the merry dance, peculiar to these people, mingled with song; and should the number be too small to afford them this their fa-

* Though these remarks have already appeared in print, they will not, I think, be found out of place here.

vourite recreation, then the cherished and dearly-loved cithern is soon upon the table, and accompanying with its simple, unassuming melody, some equally simple love-ditty or song of hunting life.

The affection the peasantry bear this instrument is very great: its tones affect them more than any instrument of greater pretensions would have power to do.

"Well, 'faith, it is the strangest thing!
What's in a cithern's tone?
It moves the heart, and makes it sad,
As I've heard many own.
And then it is so sweet and gay,
And sounds in merry style;
'Tis just as though you bravely laugh'd,
And yet did weep the while*."

But the most peculiar kind of song, and a very favourite pastime of the people throughout Bavaria, particularly in the southern parts, in Suabia, the Tyrol, Upper Austria, and Styria, are the so-called "Schnadahüpfln." These songs consist of short verses, not unlike the "Couplets" of the French, and generally contain some figurative comparison, taken from external nature, or from the occupations and pleasures of the hunter or the husbandman, and are always of a humorous, gay, or sportive character. By far the greater number have Love for their theme, and describe the lover or his "dearie," some love adventure or a lover's grief. The Spanish "Seguidillas" were somewhat like them: they too were sung to the guitar during the dance, and were frequently impro-

* Kobell's Gedichte.

vised. Seven lines was their usual length, and their subject a droll simile, or more generally some dalliance with love*.

With regard to the form of the "Schnadahüpfln," it ought, strictly speaking, to consist of not more than four lines, in which a thought, complete in itself, and as was said before, a comparison, should be expressed. Occasionally what is wished to be said is extended to two verses, but more are seldom employed. It is material that the lines should rhyme; and so particular is the singer that his verse should flow musically, that not unfrequently two of the four lines have no reference to the principal thoughts, but are introduced merely for the jingle. These verses are, as may be supposed, extremely simple, but some are very charming; and when sung to music, the cithern is the instrument, more particularly in the mountains, where the freshest songs of this description are to be heard.

* The Gipsy songs, such as Borrow describes them in 'The Zincali,' have a still nearer resemblance to the "Schnadahüpfln."

"The Gipsy poetry consists of quartets, or rather couplets, but two rhymes being discernible, and these generally imperfect, the vowels alone agreeing in sound. The thought, anecdote, or adventure described, is seldom carried beyond one stanza, in which anything is expressed which the poet wishes to impart. The musician composes the couplet at the stretch of his voice, whilst his fingers are tugging at the guitar; which style of composition is by no means favourable to a long and connected series of thought. Of course the greatest part of this species of poetry perishes as soon as born. A stanza however is sometimes caught up by the by-standers and committed to memory, and being frequently repeated, makes in time the circuit of the country."

When many persons are together, the way of singing them is as follows: one begins, and then the others sing each a "Schnadahüpfl" in succession; but each one ought either to be an answer to that which preceded, or, from an allusion made to something in the foregoing one, to spring as it were from it, and in this way form a connection between the two. These verses are very frequently extempore; and there are some persons who for hours will continue thus singing against each other, till a succession of strophes have arisen, each one separate and complete in itself, yet, like beads on a string, forming part of a whole and having reference to the rest. When such a trial of skill has commenced, he who at last can think of nothing more to say, and is consequently unable to sing his Schnadahüpfl in reply, is heartily laughed at by the rest, while shouts of applause reward the other for his ability and wit.

Such verse, being written in a dialect, it is almost impossible to render in another language, and quite so to do it justice. In the original the words are often much abbreviated, and when read or sung, run so much into one another that a line sounds but as a single word*. I give however some specimens in English, beginning with those that tell what are the characteristics of a Schnadahüpfl.

* For example:—

"A' Tanna is grea',
Is's Jahr aus u Jahr ei',
Und a' freudigi Lieb'
Muass a' bständigi sey'."

1.

A good Schnadahüpfl
Must be bold and daring;
Must climb the high mountains,
For no danger caring.

2, 3.

A good Schnadahüpfl
Is a bird in a wood,—
If drooping and moaning,
A sign that's not good.
For a good Schnadahüpfl
Is the dance of a song,
And a sorrowful dance, 'faith,
It does not last long.

4.

And a good Schnadahüpfl
Leads a right merry life,
Like an old wandering fifer
Gladdens all with his fife.

5.

And a good Schnadahüpfl
Is a flower of the field;
True, 'tis not much heeded,
Yet all like the chield.

6.

I want but a flow'ret,
No posy want I;
And a kiss now and then too
You must not deny.

7.

Now, don't ye refuse me—
I've only had two!
Come, give me the third kiss—
'Tis no good to you.

8.

And as true as clouds oft dim
The blue sky above,
So as true without jealousy
Never was love.

9.

And love has a language
That 's everywhere known;
And when that 's no more spoken
The sun will fall down.

10.

If every star there,
Were but a fair lass,
I wish the whole sky then
Would fall in the grass.

11.

The Turk and the Russian
Are nothing to me,
If only my Nanny
And I do agree.

12.

And green is a fir-tree
Right all the year through:
And a love that is happy
Must be constant too.

13.

And were there no flowers,
The bees' life were sad;
And were there no lasses
The lads would go mad.

14.

And a blossom don't grow
On a dry wither'd stump;
And you can't sing a song
If your heart 's a dead lump.

15.

A bore will not often
Do wonders, I ween;
Just in wild dashing waters
The rainbow is seen.

16.

A mind that is happy
Is a sunshiny day,
Around all is brightness,
Look wherever you may.

17.

And a mind not contented
Is rain, fog, and haze,
You see nothing pleasing
Wherever you gaze.

With the exception of the first six verses, the "Schnadahüpfln" are not taken in the order observed in the original; yet in the selection I have endeavoured to make choice of such as, when strung together, would follow each other in the proper order, and have been anxious to give those in which the character of these songs was most decidedly marked. The attentive reader will certainly have observed that in No. 6 the singer has seized on the "flower" mentioned in the preceding verse, as a subject on which to form his stanza; and having introduced something about a kiss, he who follows weaves it, as it were, into his verse, of which he makes it the subject. Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 do not so visibly spring one from the other, though the theme is still the same in each. Nos. 14, 15, 16, and 17 refer again to one and the same subject,—the blessing of a happy and contented disposition. The following are strung together at random, taken like the rest from Kobell's book of "Schnadahüpfln."

A tree is not an emperor,
Yet has it a crown;
And the birds and gold-chafers
The jewels thereon.

Though young be the oak, yet
At one glance you see
'Twill be something more than
A poor willow-tree.

And a brook finds its way on
Without much ado;
And a lad finds his lassie,
If his love 's really true.

Fidelity 's often
Like a Schnadahüfi—
Before you can look round
'Tis done or gone by.

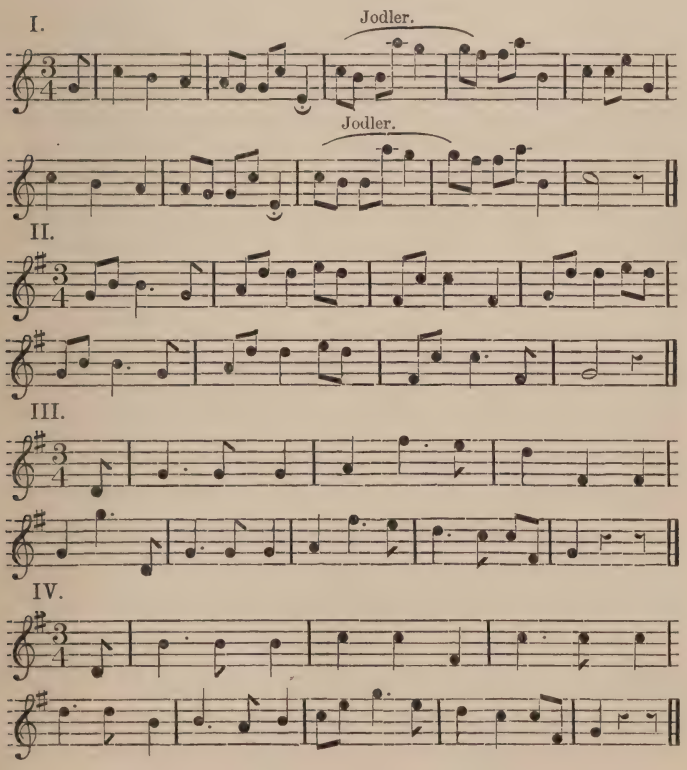
And often Fidelity 's
Like a stag's horn—
Lost quickly, nor soon found
When once it is lorn.

In some parts these "Schnadahüpfln" are sung during the dance. One of the dancers—he generally who leads off the figure—advances then to the music, sings his verse, returns to his place, and the dance is continued as before.

Such then is one of the favourite pastimes of the Bavarian mountaineer. No description however can give an adequate idea of the merry scene, when on a holiday such a party has met together. The youths, with their picturesque dresses, and hats proudly decorated with the feathers of the blackcock, and a tuft of long hair from the back of some sturdy chamois or throat of the noble hart, with a gay posy peeping from among these trophies of the chase,—the village maidens, with their boddices of brightest colours, bordered with gold and laced with chains of silver, to which hang medals of the same metal,—their high green hats trimmed with bright flowers and tasselled cord of gold and green,—their light brown hair in ample braids, showing itself beneath the broad rim

of the hat,—the shrill cry which from time to time is sent forth in moments of wild hilarity,—the snapping of fingers, with which, castanet-like, they keep time during the dance,—and, heard above all the noise, the cithern's tones, like those of an Æolian harp,—all together tends to form a scene of rural festivity, to which, for picturesqueness of appearance, or for good hearty fellowship, it would not be easy to find a parallel.

The following is the melody to which the Schnadahüpfl is sung:—



Note.

In Wales, according to Mr. W. Leathart, a similar kind of song, called "Pennillion," still affords a pleasant pastime. "They originated probably in the Bardism of the ancient Britons, and were chanted to the harp from the earliest recorded period. This Pennillion consists in singing stanzas, either attached or detached, of various lengths and metre, to any tune which the harper may play; for it is irregular, and in fact not allowable, for any particular one to be chosen. Two, three, or four bars having been played, the singer takes it up, and this is done according as the Pennil, or stanza may suit; he must end precisely with the strain, and he therefore commences in any part he may please. To the stranger it has the appearance of beginning in the middle of a line or verse, but which is not the case. Different tunes require a different number of verses to complete it; sometimes only one, sometimes four or six, as will be perceived in the directions for singing. It is then taken up by the next, and thus it proceeds through as many as choose to join in the pastime, twice round, and ending with the person that began."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

To be upon the mountains is always an inspiring, an exhilarating event; and the further you penetrate amidst them, the greater is the feeling of delight. It is a peculiar sensation you experience when climbing among them: and I know nothing like it, except the thrill of gladness and exultation which fills the heart when you have given yourself to the waves, and are forcing your way onward over the open sea. For mighty as are the forms which rear themselves around, and sensible as I always am of their vastness, on me they never exercise an overwhelming power: on the contrary, all my best energies are called forth by the sight, and by the difficulties to be grappled with: the mind seems to expand and grow,—to rise, as with newly-awakened strength, till it is on a level with the grandeur that it beholds.

On the mountain-top the same silent joy possesses my whole being as when in presence of the ocean; and

as I have sat on the rocks of the Lizard or Land's End, looking out for hours over the Atlantic, and watching the long waves that heaved their ponderous weight along, awe was in my heart, it is true, and a tremendous sense of God's omnipotence; but there was no feeling of littleness: on the contrary, within me rose an elate consciousness of power, an exulting joy that, vast as was that ocean, my human mind could still encompass it,—in thought could traverse it to its very utmost verge:—a great rejoicing, deep and unspeakable, that I, even I, was able to take in such immensity.

And this effect, the grandest appearances of Nature always produce in me. They do not crush the mind into nothingness, but cause it rather to feel

"An equal among mightiest energies."

They incite it to action, and call on it to put forth its strength. For then, when thus face to face with sublimity, one mighty sensation, like an instinct, becomes always suddenly quick within it,—a glad, triumphant consciousness of inalienable divinity.

But there are besides many other minor sources of joy, for the mountains form an exclusive world of their own,—a world with its own delights, phenomena and wonders; and not only the things themselves, but even their very names have often a strange charm, that awakens the fancy and sets it busily to work. For he who lives constantly with Nature, watching all her moods, nor loving her less, but rather the more, for her changing and waywardness, will not give to familiar

things, and to places that are dear to him, a barren name; but remembering each as connected with an event—call it how he will—the word he chooses will have a meaning, a significance. The wider our world, the less sympathy have we for individual objects; but if we make a valley our home, we become as intimate with every part, and with all belonging to the dale, as we are with the children, and the men and women that inhabit it. And, where this is the case, such objects become a part of us; they live in our heart, and we invest them with attributes, and we speak of them almost as though they had feelings like ourselves. Hence the personifications which we find in the talk of the mountaineer,—the vapours, the storm, the torrents, the deep lake, are to him not inanimate things: he has heard or looked on them with dread or with complacent joy; and he knows the ways of each, as though it were a living creature which he himself had reared. And this is the beginning of poetry.

I have often asked the name of a peak, or field of snow, only in the hope I might hear that it was some "Spitz," or "Kopf," or "Firner." The positive pleasure such mere names afford me is greater than I can say. "Wetter Spitz," "Teufels Horn," "Uebergossener Alp," "Gems Wand," "Sonnen Joch," "Steinenes Meer,"—what painting there is in these words; what scenes they call up, and how they invest the dead, senseless rock with a living interest! Yonder peak becomes, for me, more than a mere mass of dumb stone, when I hear that there the wild elements come

together and hold their meetings, and descend thence in storm and tempest upon the lower world. Another, perhaps, has a dread story locked up in its name, and as you hear it, your fancy conjures up a tale of terrible retribution, overtaking some great sin.

The mists also, as seen on the mountains, are different from anything of the sort ever witnessed in the plain. They sometimes come clothed in loveliness, but they will rise too dread and dimly, and with a fearful and unsparing power. Here they assume great forms, and are a reality, a presence. They rise up, and pass slowly by you, like sad ghosts, or come rushing on along the sides of the mountain, a long array of muffled shapes of superhuman bulk. It is an impressive, a very impressive sight; and not only on account of their vast proportions as they sweep through the air, but because of the change that is wrought by them; for they separate you at once and entirely from that dear world which you look upon as your home. There you stand, cut off from humanity, and as lone as though you were on the broad sea, a thousand miles from any shore. At such time, I think, that even one who called himself a misanthrope would acknowledge a returning love of his kind, and feel that he belonged to them, and would long for but one glimpse only of his and their dwelling-place. And when such glimpse at last is caught, through a rent in the dense volume of cloud, how fair the earth appears! it seems fairer and brighter than ever it did before.

One feeling, moreover, was always present to me; and, whether lying down to sleep on the mountain-ridge at noon, or when sitting of an evening with my peasant friends in a cottage or Senn Hütte, that pleasant consciousness, like a merry, laughing face, that peeps in upon you, go where you will, was ever in my thoughts. It was, to use the words of the author of 'Eothen,' for he had felt it too,—the delight at being beyond the reach of "respectability." I often quite hugged myself at the thought, "Not one respectable person near me, look where I would!" and this thought imparts always a sense of freedom, quite distinct from that which the boundless space and the fresh breeze bring with them: it is the sense of liberty, which he feels who has escaped from heavy thraldom, who has slipped off his handcuffs, and got away over the walls of his prison, and laughs to find himself in the fields and beyond pursuit. There is a feeling of self-satisfaction in the heart, and a very wantonness in your contentment and glee, as you repeat again and again the assurances of your safety,—of being beyond the reach of either the "genteel" or the "respectable."

As I have observed in a preceding chapter, it is not the mere killing which affords him pleasure who stalks through the forest in pursuit of game. Besides the natural appearances which will meet him at almost every step, and which contribute so largely to his delight, he has another interest,—the observation of the habits of animals. In dense forests this is not so easy; but in the beech-woods, where there is less under-

growth, and where too the sun can penetrate more easily through the spreading boughs, and so illumine the leaf-strewn ground and the beds of green and brown moss, there you often can observe the creatures in their forest-home, and get well acquainted with their family or household life. . It is a pretty sight to watch the care of the doe for her fawn, or to see the two playing together as a happy human mother will do with her baby; or, if very still, you may steal forward near enough to see the majestic stag himself at rest in the shade, and may observe how he enjoys the coolness of the spot, and, with a languid Sybarite air, now lifts, now turns his head, and puts back his vast antlers even upon his broad sides and shoulders. But he hears a sound; or did the breath of air that rustled through the leaves carry to his nostrils the taint of your neighbourhood? He is no longer the slothful Sardanapalus, but with bold front and head erect, he is now "every inch a king."

Among a family of wild-boars I have sometimes remarked one,—generally a weakling, and more helpless than the rest, for with boars, as with men, the strong like to show their power,—who was buffeted and ill-treated by all his brothers and sisters. Do what he would, nothing was right; sometimes the mother, uttering a disapproving grunt, would give him a nudge, to make him move more quickly, and that would be a sign for all the rest of his relations to begin showing their contempt for him too. One would push him, and then another; for, go where he might, he was sure

to be in the way. It is true such poor little unfortunate was generally the most awkward of the family; but then constant ill-treatment is enough to make any one embarrassed and awkward.

The caution with which a stag, particularly an old one well versed in the ways of men, will emerge from a thicket into the open space, is very great. With his head almost on the ground, he steals forth as stealthily as a fox. You do not hear a dead leaf rustle, so noiseless are his movements: with his nose low down, and advanced as much as possible, he will stand immoveable for some minutes, with no part of him visible except the nostrils and the large bright eyes,—these alone move; and when the ground has been thus carefully reconnoitered, without however at all turning his head, the rest of the creature then steals forth, and with a fleet step he flits across the road, and into the shelter of the opposite thicket. It is a mystery to me how a stag is able to pass through the intricate foliage with his wide-spreading antlers, without disturbing the boughs,—so cautiously, indeed, as not even to cause a twig or the trembling of a leaf to betray his approach. He is aware of the danger, and flings them back quite low behind him: when in full flight through the forest he does the same, lest he strike them against the overhanging branches in his headlong haste.

One thing too will have struck every person who has had opportunities of observing wild animals; the quickness, namely, with which the wounds they have received generally heal. When however we consider

their mode of life, and the simple food they eat, there is less difficulty in accounting for it. Fresh grass and herbs and pure spring-water as diet must necessarily act favourably on the state of the blood; add to which, a life passed in the open air, inhaling health at each respiration; and our surprise diminishes at what we here see Nature do when left wholly to herself.

It is not at all uncommon to find old rifle-balls in deer, and the marks of shots that failed to bring them down at the time. But where a bone has been shattered, and the animal has still managed to escape, it is really interesting to see how the splintered parts will loosen and fall away; and the wound then nicely closing, the limb presents the same appearance as if it had been amputated by a skilful surgeon. I once saw a deer that had been injured, no doubt by a ball, in the fore knee-joint. The stump had healed, and was perfectly covered. Last winter (1851) I watched a boar that had also lost the fore-leg; but in this case it was high up, close to the shoulder. It was shot some weeks later, when I was out in the forest, and so perfectly had Nature performed her work, leaving behind no trace of a former fracture, that some were present who insisted the animal must have been thus maimed from its birth. There was no scar, no unevenness of surface, to indicate that the bone had once been broken, which however was the case.

But the hardiest animals I have met with are the fallow-deer: it indeed takes a good deal to kill them. I have myself seen bucks with several balls in their

body, feeding some hours afterwards as quietly as if nothing had happened. A roe is a very delicate creature, and can bear little; a shot almost anywhere will bring it down. I have sometimes met one in the wood running away from some real or imaginary danger; and it was quite pitiable to see its condition, agitated and exhausted with exertion, the exquisitely fine limbs trembling beneath its body, and its flanks palpitating as it gasped for breath: every movement showed how little its fragile form was able to endure any unwonted roughness. The chamois is less susceptible than the roe; but a wound soon makes it sicken; when struck it will immediately climb to some solitary spot, and there remain. If by chance you shoot one that still carries traces of a former wound, you may be sure it was slight and of little importance. But chamois even, as well as red-deer, often get bad falls; and the antlers of the one, and the horns of the other, frequently bear evidence of a headlong tumble over the rocks.

In old works on Venery strange stories are related about the habits of animals of chase. In former days the pursuit of the stag and wild-boar was a royal pastime, and those animals which afforded such noble sport were on that account elevated to a rank above the more common brutes. They were—without offence be it said—the aristocracy of the animal creation. For in barbarous times the attributes of the sovereign are always exaggerated; and, as "the fountain of honour," his ennobling influence is extended to the elephant that carries him, the steeds that draw his chariot, and

even to the beasts of the forest which he happens to take especial pleasure in pursuing. Hence, therefore, such are protected from being molested by an ignoble hand. Now as soon as a person or thing is hedged about by privilege, as soon as a halo is thrown round either, an unusual interest is at once excited, and with it comes vulgar curiosity. When this is the case, be sure that Fable will henceforth have more to tell than Truth. We may suppose too that the wonderful tales which thus grow current, are rather grateful than otherwise to the pride of him for whom alone such marvellous animals are reserved.

"The stag," so writes Isidorus, "is the foe of serpents; and when he is old and sick, he goeth before the serpent's hole, blows and respires therein, so that the serpent may creep out, which then he presently stampeth on with his feet and devoureth. And he goeth straightway to the water and drinks, so that the poison may spread through his whole body; and as soon as he feeleth the poison, he commenceth running hither and thither in such wise that he getteth warm and fain would sweat, and hereupon he is so purged and purified by the operation of Nature, that he retaineth nothing more in his body, and so becometh renewed and young again, and changes his old hair. Music he loveth much, and is well pleased and joyful when he heareth a piping or the sound of a flute, or any gentle song.

"A stone is to be found in the deer after she hath dropped her calf: she did eat it before to assist the

birth. The stag liveth to be one hundred years old. Three hundred years after Cæsar's death one was found with a golden collar round its neck, and graven thereon 'Cæsar me fecit.' The stag hath a large heart, and a bone therein. The stag is ashamed when he is without his horn."

In those ancient books, in which the noble Art of Venerie is bravely upheld, as inferior only to the science of war, and the excitement of the chase deemed scarcely less heart-thrilling than a battle, much weight is always laid on the qualifications of a hunter. "And the hunter"—so it is written in a quaint old volume of some centuries ago—"shall be strong of body, bold, and of gay disposition: in body not too stout, in order that he may bear work, and in time of need follow well afoot. Nor should he be too spare of habit or meagre, in order that he may have strength in him, and so go to meet the wild animals with greater safety. The manly hunter followeth the praiseworthy pastime of the chase, nor doth he let himself be withheld by snow, cold, rain, water, mountain, valley, desert, hunger, thirst, heat, unrest, vigils, work, trouble, nor danger."

Whether on the plain, in the forest, or on the mountain, he who has tarried much with Nature, and made her his companion, will, unless duller than a clod, have at times experienced strange emotions in the solitude; familiar shapes will have assumed unwonted forms, and awe will have seized on him, and great fear; he will have heard "low breathings coming after him," or "steps almost as silent as the turf they trod;" and

things, even low sounds, have been to him as a Presence, and he will have felt sorely troubled. And this not merely in the darkness, but in the broad light of noon; when the stillness of midnight seemed hanging in the air, yet the sun-rays were streaming silently down the stems of the beeches, and there was no living creature to be seen. At such times I have watched and listened,—listened long and earnestly, not willing, not venturing rather, to break by my steps the profound repose. Once, I remember, on an Autumn day, when in a wood in Suabia, I suddenly looked round, and behold! right before me, on a clear space amid the bushes, stood a deer at gaze. To me then it seemed no ordinary creature, but of gigantic size, the like of which I had never seen before. There it rose above a little knoll, encircled in golden light, and its vast form surrounded with a glory. We gazed for some time at each other in great astonishment; and had I beheld a bright cross gleaming over its head, such as St. Hubert saw, I could not have been more amazed. Suddenly it bounded away, and the spell was broken.

Wordsworth, in his 'Prelude,' describes with wondrous truth such visionary appearances, and the mental organization that called them forth. He tells how in the dusk some peak, as "with voluntary power instinct," upreared its head, and growing still in size, and seemingly "with purpose of its own, strode after him." And very fine, because so very true, is the picture of him who, "in majestic indolence," wanders

on the hills, and sees objects, in portentous size, looming through the mist. Indeed no other poet has passages so full of the *spirit* of mountain scenery as Wordsworth. It is true they are the phenomena of such heights only as Westmoreland and Cumberland present; but though these are not high mountains, they have a solemn character of their own, and the mists assemble there, and silence is round them, except when the sough of the wind is heard. The generality of persons tarry amid the grandeur but a short time, and then describe their impressions of its sublimity and their own great wonderment. But it is not by mere passing visits that intimate acquaintanceship can be formed: he only who lives with Nature long and frequently can obtain an insight into all her hidden ways. Nor does she reveal herself but to him who truly loves her: he must learn to interpret her changeful countenance, not by scientific rules, but by the force of sympathy,—the sympathy of deep affection. And it is such familiar intercourse that forms one of the great charms experienced by him who, with rifle at his back, stalks up the mountain, or sits watching on its summit.

The forest, like the mountain, has a delight of its own,—a peculiar, mysterious influence, which grows around the heart, and holds it with the power of a sweetly-influencing spell. The voices and breathings there are different to those heard among the rocks,—that peculiar rustle, as of passing wings, still heard when not a breath is stirring,—the murmur among

the branches, and the whisper which floats above the ground, as though the spirits of the flowers were moving about with a hush in that forest world,—all this keeps the eye, and ear, and mind vigilant, and you tread with caution and expectancy among the creeping sunbeams and quickly-flitting shadows. You hear steps now, and the low footfall sounds strangely in that solitude; but it is retreating, and soon is lost in the surrounding silence. You saw nothing, and it is this very circumstance which imparts mystery, and makes you listen still when the pattering sound has quite died away. Or in strolling on, you will suddenly look round, and from out a thicket see two large bright eyes and a hairy face meet your gaze, and looking fixedly upon you. It is as though the woods were once more peopled with their ancient inhabitants, and the fawns and satyrs again returned to their old leafy home.

Every people while yet young, while their instincts are still fresh and their sympathies keen and alive to natural influences, has made the forest their temple; choosing, if they built an altar, the dense interlacing branches of venerable trees for the roof that was to shelter it. They felt how solemn was the subdued light, and the trembling stillness: the low murmur attuned their simple minds religiously, and a presentiment awoke within them that there "was a spirit in the woods."

And now even in the songs you hear the young hunters sing, while sitting round the hearth of an

evening after a good day's sport, the forest and its delights play a prominent part. Among the northern nations the forest may be said to have had, and indeed still to have, a poetry of its own. There were the "Wald-Märchen" and "Wald-Lieder," and in its gloom many a myth was born. The Germans have an appropriate word—Waldlust—to describe the peculiar delight which the woodland imparts; and as such solitude is also different from that experienced any other where, for it too there is a particular designation—Wald-einsamkeit.

But, as many a story in the preceding pages will have shown, there are other far more stirring causes of excitement, contrasting strangely enough with the calmer pleasures I have just attempted to describe. From time to time a report will come of the depredations committed by poachers, or that one of the foresters has been badly wounded, or that a Tyrolese has been shot who had come across to fetch a chamois in the Bavarian mountains. Or perhaps, according to a preconcerted arrangement, on a certain day all the gamekeepers will be on the look-out for miles round, in expectation of meeting the marauders; and, if you also go out, the report of a rifle from some neighbouring mountain fills you with expectation, well knowing that on such an occasion the foresters would not fire at game. It must therefore have been at a man, unless indeed the shot was from a poacher stalking in his old haunts; if so, he will hardly escape now, for the keepers will close in upon him and cut

off his retreat. Meanwhile the rocks opposite, and the well-known passes, are carefully scanned with the telescope, to see if any human being can be discerned among them.

On the frontiers of Bavaria and the Tyrol a sort of border warfare was constantly kept up, much the same as in former days was carried on in our own country in the Northern Marches. And as "the Percè owt of Northomberlande" did make a vow "to hunte in the mountaynes of Chyviat," just so would occasionally a band of armed peasants from the Valley of the Inn set off to drive the chamois on the Plau Berg or the Miesing.

Many a deed of boldest daring occurs at such times, when the foresters, coming up with the freebooters, attack them at once, often without heeding their own inferiority in number. But a dauntless bearing, a knowledge of the ground, a quick eye, and a readiness in seizing every available advantage, will nearly always obtain the mastery, even when the odds are most disproportionate. Tales of such sudden encounters with poachers, or of long and patient watchings for them at some well-known pass, are never-failing subjects of conversation; and told too, as they not seldom are, in the living words of passion, and with the energy and eloquence of strong natural impulse, you become aroused as the narrative proceeds; you share all the excitement of the stealthy approach or the unequal strife, and feel an ardent longing to join in the affray.

The following incident, that occurred a few years ago near Brannenburg, will show what daring and recklessness of human life these feuds inspire.

One of the keepers, while out on the mountain, saw three Tyrolese cross the Inn. He at once suspected what was their intention, and instantly set off for a pass among the rocks, where, if he were right in his conjecture, he knew they would surely come. For an hour or more he waited, without hearing or seeing anything of them. At length however he espied the poachers advancing up the mountain, and, keeping close to avoid being seen, let them approach. The place where he stood was a narrow path, with rocks rising on one side, and on the other a precipice. When the men were at a short distance from him, he stood forth and called to them to lay down their rifles. As they did not obey, he shouted that, cowards as they were, he would lay down his, and challenged them, if they dared, to do the same and come on all three of them armed only with their poles. They did so, and the three advanced upon him. Calm and collected, he watched his opportunity, and, as they approached, thrust his iron-shod pole two inches deep into the breast of the foremost man, and sent him toppling down into the abyss. The others, terror-stricken, sprang back to seize their rifles, but the keeper was too quick for them: he had already grasped his own, and levelling it threatened to send a bullet through the first who should dare to raise his weapon. There was nothing left them now but to retreat; and as they

did so the keeper fired at one, sending a charge of coarse shot into his back and wounding him badly.

The keepers, on the other hand, well know that should they fall into the power of their enemies, the retribution will be terrible. An instance of this sort was told me by a friend who knew well all the parties concerned. I give the story in his own words.

"Meier, the forester stationed at Gmund*, was one day out on his usual rounds, when suddenly he heard the crack of a rifle. He went towards the place, and there—it was on the Gschwendter Berg—he saw a poacher standing over a stag which he had just shot. Meier dashed at him; they struggled long together, but at last he overpowered the fellow, and binding his hands together, took him as prisoner to Miesbach, to the house of the head-forester. Here he got a light cart and horse, with a lad for driver, and making the poacher seat himself beside the boy, Meier walked along near the cart, with his rifle over his shoulder. As the man's hands were tied firmly together, he thought there was no danger of his attempting to escape.

"You know the road from Agathenried to Miesbach, and how hilly and rough it is? Well, just as they reached the steep hill, the poacher gave the lad who was seated next him a shove, and sent him out of the cart; then taking hold of the reins, which he could very well do although he was handcuffed, made the

* Gmund lies at the northern extremity of Tegernsee, on the border of the lake.

horse set off at full gallop down the hill. Meier, who was a little behind, seeing the impossibility of overtaking him, levelled his rifle and shot him right through the middle of the back. The man rolled out of the cart quite dead.

"This circumstance, as you may suppose, called forth feelings of deadliest hate. All the poacher's friends were mad with rage at their comrade's death. Month after month this state of excitement lasted, and time did not seem to abate their fury in the least. They only waited for an opportunity to take their revenge.

"It was perhaps a year, or may be a year and a half, after Meier had shot the poacher, that he and Probst and Fuchs caught a couple of peasants out stalking on the Schuss Kogel; and having taken away their rifles, and bound their hands behind them, marched both off to the Justice at Miesbach. On their way (it was a most incautious thing to do, and I cannot conceive how they could act so)—on their way they stopped to rest on some moss in the wood. It was a glade-like place, some few yards in extent, with trees all round. They were sitting here with their prisoners, their rifles beside them, when suddenly a band of armed men rushed out of the wood: they had followed the keepers through the forest, and had stalked close up to them unobserved. What could three men do against such a number, attacked too as they were quite unawares? The poachers beat them dreadfully, and only left them when they thought all were killed.

"After a time Probst came to himself, and lifting his head and looking round, saw the others covered with blood, lying motionless on the ground. He got up and tried to rouse them, but he found both were dead—so at least he thought. He then, still bleeding and covered with wounds, tottered homewards. After he was gone, Fuchs recovered a little, and observed that Probst was gone. He spoke to Meier, but found him dead. Stunned, and bewildered, and staggering, he still tried to reach the nearest house, and made his way to Gmund, which was about an hour and a half's walk distant. Meier lived here, and Fuchs went straight to the cottage to tell his wife what had befallen her husband, and that he had been killed in the wood. Hardly had he finished his story when he fell forward, and dropped down dead on the floor. The sudden change of temperature on coming into the warm room out of the fresh air, added to the exertion and loss of blood, was no doubt the cause of his instantaneous death. Probst survived, though the wounds in his head were terrible. He had recognized most of the men, but when they were called upon for their defence, each proved an *alibi;* one bringing witnesses to swear that on that day he was at a shooting match in a village some miles off, and another that at such time he was in the Tyrol; and thus they all managed to escape."

It was my intention, had my indisposition not prevented me, to have gone from Partenkirchen to Berchtesgaden, and endeavoured to obtain a day's stalking

Comp. v. Th Horschelt.

Gedr. in J.B. Kuhn's Lith. Anstalt, München.

Lith. v. F. Hohe.

there. I was particularly desirous to do so, not merely on account of the abundance of game, but chiefly because the mountains are different in feature to those where I had hitherto been. They are wilder and more rugged*, and the difficult places far more frequent. Narrow paths along a ledge overhanging a precipice are sometimes not to be avoided: they *must* be passed in order to proceed further. In more than one place a wall of rock shuts out all advance: a path is impossible in such a spot, and yet if you *could* scale that perpendicular face of the mountain, you would then be able to pursue your way according to your pleasure. You have come so far, but further no living thing, except a bird, can get unaided. Nor is there any other spot where you may pass: this wall of rock forms a break in your path of, it may be, a dozen yards or so, and which but for this barrier would have suffered no interruption. If you cannot surmount the obstacle, you must retrace your steps for hours, and climb up the other side of the mountain. But to prevent the necessity of this, in such places bars of iron have been driven into the rock and left projecting sixteen or eighteen inches. They are placed slantingly one above another, and by them, as on the steps of a ladder, the hunter mounts up the steep face of the rock. He must of course be careful that his rifle does not swing against it, and that nothing happens which

* Das steinene Meer ("The ocean of stone") is here,—so called from the jagged rocks that, rising up one behind the other, and extending on and on, look like the waves of a petrified sea.

might make him lose his balance while thus hanging in the air. It is essential too that he should observe which foot and hand he begins with; for if he put the wrong one first, he will hardly be able to go on; the bars being so arranged to receive, as he mounts, this one the left, that one the right foot, and those above the grasp of the right and left hand accordingly. To go up such a place is not quite pleasant, but coming down is still less so; for in descending you are obliged to look below to find the projecting piece of iron on which to place your foot at the next step, and in doing this you cannot prevent your eye perceiving the terrific depth below; and, as I said before, this is never agreeable. Moreover when coming downward it is somewhat embarrassing to relinquish your hold of one iron bar, in order to grasp the other below.

There are places in Berchtesgaden where a whole mountain-ridge has but a single outlet—one spot only by which even a chamois can pass out. If therefore this be stopped up by artificial means, a natural enclosure of rocks is at once formed, shutting in, like a park wall, the game for many miles. This circumstance shows at once the abruptness of their formation. The stags, that might otherwise cross the lake by swimming, are prevented from doing so by poles moored in deep water, and left to float on the surface. When the deer have reached the poles, their progress is arrested; for, being out of their depth, they are unable to climb over them; and turning, swim back again to the shore.

It was here that a friend of mine performed an exploit which hardly the boldest hunter could surpass —a deed so very perilous that I never think of the several circumstances attending it, without feeling something like giddiness and being ill at ease. Yet there is a strange charm in danger; and as a child will ask for a tale to be repeated which it has already often heard and been frightened at, so I inquired again about my friend's adventure when the other day we were once more together.

"Tell me, Arco," said I, "the story of your going after the buck you shot near the Konigs See,—the terrible place, you know, where in coming back you grew giddy and sat down, and thought you would never be able to get out again."

"That was on the Ober See where you mean, just opposite Thal Berg Wand; but I thought you knew the story already*."

"So I do," I replied; "you told it us all a long time ago, one day after dinner; but I don't remember the particulars exactly, and I should like to hear it again."

"Well," said he, "this was how it happened:—I had wounded a chamois, and as usual he climbed up and passed along a wall of rock, where we lost sight of him. We knew that he would not be able to get out further on, for it was a terrible place, I can tell you."

"And very high up, was it not?" I asked, interrupting him,—"right over the lake."

* The spot itself where this occurred is called Sailer Stätt, and is on the Walch Hütt Wand.

"Three thousand feet," he replied; "not an inch less,—that I am certain of: it was a perfect wall of rock, and below was the lake. But I do not mean to say that the water was directly at the foot of the rock, though from the great height it looked as if it were so. It was perhaps fifty or sixty feet off, but that did not make much difference. Nor was the wall of rock, though it looked so, as perpendicular as a plummet-line; sometimes it receded, and then advanced again, as is always the case. If you had fallen, you might have bounded off from some projecting crag once or twice, but would at last have dropped into the lake, though not quite at the foot of the mountain. Well, we all said that the chamois, if left quiet, would be sure to come down again, and that it was better to leave him now and not follow him. The thing was, I believe, if the truth were told, none of us had any wish to go along that narrow ledge; and we therefore persuaded ourselves the best thing would be not to disturb him. But we first made a fire to prevent his coming back, and thus had him safe where he was till the morrow."

"This was in the afternoon?"

"Yes, and we then went home. The next day, when out stalking, I looked across with my glass from a mountain opposite to where I thought he must be; and sure enough I saw him on a projecting ledge, leaning against a pine that grew out of a crevice in the rock."

"Was he not dead then?" I asked.

"Yes, he was dead; but he must have expired while leaning against the tree, for he was sitting exactly as if alive; had no tree been there, he would have rolled over, and we should never have seen anything more of him. Well, I then went to see about fetching him out, but they all said it was quite impossible to get along the ledge. However the chamois was there, and I was determined not to lose him without at least making a trial to reach the place. So I went first, and a young forester and one of the wood-cutters followed."

"How broad was the ledge?" I asked.

"It was nowhere broader than from here to there," he replied, pointing to two lines in the flooring of the room, marking a space of seventeen inches wide; "*broader than that it was nowhere*—of that I am certain; but in many parts it was not larger than this border," pointing to some inlaid woodwork, seven inches wide; "and on one side, rising up above you, the wall of rock, and on the other a depth of 3000 feet down to the lake. We went along some way, when there, right before us, was a gap,—not very broad, it is true, but still too wide to step across, or even for a jump. The cleft was perhaps five and a half feet wide, and below in the chasm it was wild and frightful to look at."

"But how was it possible to pass?"

"We had a tree cut down, and flung the stem across, and went over one after the other. At last we reached the place where the chamois lay. It was a green spot, just large enough for us three to stand

upon,—as nearly the size of this round table as may be (forty-two inches in diameter), only it was rather longer at one end, which gave us more room to open and clean the chamois. Now we had to return, and to carry the buck with us; that was the most difficult part of our undertaking."

"It was in going back you grew giddy, was it not?"

"Yes, for the first time in my life. It was not exactly giddiness either, but rather fright,—a feeling that now it was all over with me, and that I should never come out again. But there was no time to lose, or it would really have been all over with me; so pulling out my flask, I took a long draught of the spirit that was in it, and sat down to recover myself."

"But where?—not on the narrow ledge surely?"

"Yes, on the ledge, with my feet hanging over. I was obliged to sit down. I sat there for about a quarter of an hour. But then came the getting up,—that was a difficult piece of work; for as the ledge was narrow, I could not turn as I should have done anywhere else; for, if I had, my shoulder or elbow or head might have knocked against the rock behind me, and that, causing me to lose my balance, would have sent me over; so I was obliged to get first one foot up very carefully, and then at last the other, and when that was done, all the rest I managed well enough. Nothing on earth however should ever induce me to go that way again."

"How long was the way altogether?" I asked,—"the ledge that projected from the face of the rock."

"Altogether about two hundred yards. But then you must not think it was everywhere so narrow as this strip of wood, though often it was not broader; nor was the rock at our side everywhere quite perpendicular; but sometimes it sloped back, now more, now less, which of course made it much easier for us. If it had been the whole way so narrow, nobody in the world could have borne it; and the rock was not everywhere quite smooth; but here and there, exactly perhaps where the ledge was narrowest, would be a little roughness or projection, on which we could hold with our fingers; and that, you know, was quite enough to make the passage possible. For example, at the gap across which we flung the tree; there, rising up from below, was the point of a rock. We could just lay hold of it, by stooping down as we crossed our narrow bridge. This was a lucky chance, for without such help we could not possibly have passed, there being nothing on either side to steady ourselves by: the cleft in the rock went all the way up, and to walk across that fir-tree like a rope-dancer, three thousand feet high in the air, was no joke. As it was, that chance piece of rock helped us over capitally.

"But the rock, I suppose, rose some height beside you, did it not? for, if not, it must have been very difficult to make an aid of it in crossing."

"No," replied my friend, "the rock only came up just to about the tree. That was the difficulty: we had to stoop down, almost sitting on the ground, and planting one foot firmly on the ledge, to slide the other

forward, till we thought we could manage to reach as far as to the point of rock, without losing our balance. We tried first of course, then stretched out one hand further and further till at last we had reached it. Once in our hand, it was all right. Then the other foot was to be gently advanced close to the first; and again slided carefully forwards to the opposite ledge; and when it was firmly planted there, and we thought we were well balanced, the bit of rock was let go, and the foot still on the middle of the tree was quickly brought up beside the other. Luckily the rock rose just in the centre of the gap; for if it had been nearer one side or the other we could not have accomplished the passage, as it would then have been impossible to reach and lay hold of the stone, while one foot was still on firm ground."

"When you came back, how did you lift the chamois over the gap?" I inquired. "You surely did not carry him over?"

"No indeed, it was as much as we could do to get over ourselves, without having a dead weight like that at our backs. When we had him so far, we pushed him forwards on the tree, till one of us on the opposite side could lay hold of his fore legs and pull him over; but we tied him first to a rock: we dared not trust to our being able to hold him; for had he slipped while in our hands, he would have pulled us over too."

"But," said I, "to me it is unintelligible how it is possible to get along a ledge so narrow, when you have

a wall close beside you. Your own shoulder or hip, knocking against it, must make you lose your balance. It is all very well when the face of the rock inclines away from you; but when straight up,—that is what I do not understand." And I tried to move along-side the wall of the room with my body close against it.

"In that way of course you cannot," said he, watching me. "For it is an old joke to place a person with one foot close against a wall, parallel with it, and to tell him to lift up the other. He is unable to do it of course; he loses his balance at once; but move your foot a little, with your toes to the wall, and heel overhanging the ledge," he continued, and trying the experiment himself, while he spoke,—"no, that is not quite enough yet,—a little more,—ah! yes, that will do now. You see *now* I can lift up the other foot." And turning with his face to the wall, he moved a step in advance. "And then, as I said before, the wall is seldom quite straight, and one can hold on a little here and there. But it was not merely ourselves —there was the tree—we had to go back and drag the tree along the ledge."

"I only wonder that you found any one to accompany you. I am surprised that, when the others saw you were determined to venture, they did not let you make the attempt alone."

"No, no," he replied, "they would not do that; first they think that they climb better than any one else; and that, where a gentleman goes, they can also. Beside this, I must say, all those fellows in the moun-

tains never desert you in time of need: they have a feeling of honour, which I never met with in a like degree elsewhere. I went, and that was enough; they would be sure not to stay behind."

"It is the only time you were giddy: I suppose it is the ugliest place you ever were in, is it not?"

"Why yes, I cannot remember having been in any more dangerous. But what was so disagreeable in this case, was having to return by the same path; that makes the matter a thousand times worse. In going the first time, if you do feel uncomfortable, you have the consolation of knowing that you are leaving the danger behind you, and that every step brings you nearer the accomplishment of your undertaking. Besides, the first time the difficulties are all new; you are not aware how great they are, till you are in the very midst of them and they are half over; and, before you have time to get ill at ease, they are nearly passed: but in coming back again the same way, you have a foreknowledge of the danger to be incurred; you remember what you felt when in the difficult situation the first time, and have an unwillingness, a thorough disinclination, to endure the same once more. All is so fresh in your mind, that you hang back when called on to do it over again. And as you proceed, in approaching some ugly place, your thoughts are occupied with it all the while; instead of being calm, you are excited, and fancy makes the difficulty greater even than it is. If fear once gets hold of you under such circumstances, you are almost

surely lost. It was fear, not giddiness, that overcame me, and made me sit down; for had I been giddy, I could not have looked, as I did, into the depth below; but it was a feeling of horror at the place I was in, a shuddering dread that I could not shake off. What I drank saved me; without it I should not have been able to free myself from that overwhelming anxiety."

But it is time this last Chapter should come to a close. In it I have dwelt purposely on the particular sources of joy for him who follows the game upon the mountain, and the varied excitements that from time to time will stir up his heart. In the others it was my wish, while describing the art of chamois-hunting, to give some account of mountain life; to introduce it as a fitting background, although not absolutely necessary to bring out the principal objects of the picture.

With regard to the accounts of each day's stalking, it must be remembered that, with one exception, I hunted always in places where the chamois had been harried in the preceding years, and where consequently scarcely a head of game was left. Success therefore was difficult of attainment, though all the sweeter on that account than it would have been under more favourable circumstances. It is perhaps well that it was so uncertain, for repeated fruitless attempts teach more than the brightest good fortune; and, after all, one learns nothing really well except by such experience. Be it not thought, however, that in saying this I mean to exalt myself into an authority; I am well aware that, between my experience in chamois

hunting and that of a sportsman like my friend Count Max Arco, there is about as much difference as might be found in the military knowledge of a lieutenant who had served a campaign, and that of a Wellington or Radetsky. Such as it is, however, the record is a faithful one; in no one instance am I conscious of exaggeration, or that a single assertion may be found which is not truth.

THE END.

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